Education for development policy and management: impacts on individual and organizational capacity-building

Other

EDUCATION FOR DEVELOPMENT POLICY AND MANAGEMENT: IMPACTS ON INDIVIDUAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY-BUILDING

A study of four postgraduate programmes based in UK and Southern Africa

Hazel Johnson and Alan Thomas

Synthesis Report of a research project by:

Open University UK (OU)
Southern African Political Economy Series (SAPES) Trust
University of South Africa (UNISA) School of Business Leadership
Zimbabwe Open University (ZOU)

Based on an original report by the research team: Seife Ayele, Peter Dzvimbo, Hazel Johnson, Patricia Kasiamhuru, Joyce Malaba, Pauline Manjengwa, Florence Nazare, Herman Potgieter, Alan Thomas, Sheila Tyler, Alan Woodley

October 2003

Acknowledgements

We are extremely grateful for the financial support provided by the UK Department for International Development (Education Department) for this research.

We would also like to thank all the students and line managers and/or colleagues of students who participated in this study, both in answering the questionnaire and in giving their time to be interviewed, in some cases several times.

This research was based on a partnership between four institutions: Open University in the UK (OU), Southern African Political Economy Series Trust (SAPES Trust), University of South Africa (School of Business Leadership) (UNISA) and Zimbabwe Open University (ZOU). The research was carried out by staff from the four institutions. The survey was designed with inputs from the partners and finalised at the OU. Sheila Tyler and Alan Woodley played a large part in the survey design. Each institution administered its own survey. Data from the survey was analysed and interpreted by Seife Ayele, Hazel Johnson, Joyce Malaba and Herman Potgieter. Joyce Malaba and staff from SAPES Trust also produced the charts. The case studies were carried out by Peter Dzvimbo, Hazel Johnson, Patricia Kasiamhuru, Pauline Manjengwa, Florence Nazare, Herman Potgieter and Alan Thomas. Alan Thomas was responsible for the analysis of the case studies.

We would like to acknowledge the additional financial, academic, technical and secretarial support provided by staff in the partner institutions, particularly:

Open University
Faculty of Technology Research Funding Committee
Rod Barrow
Donna Brumfitt
Jenny Curtis
Marlene Gordon
Edward Hailstone
Nick Haycox
Marie Lacy
Katherine Prince
Denise Swann
Stuart Watts

SAPES Trust
Khabele Matlosa
Jennifer Chiriga
Solomon Chiwara

University of South Africa (School of Business Leadership)
Zeenat Rajah-Hoosen
Ian Wallis

Zimbabwe Open University
Zvinaiye Chimbadzwa
Patrick Jack
Emmanuel Maendaenda
Suwisa Muchengetwa
Jessie Mukondiwa
Katrina Wallace-Karenga

The views expressed in this report are those of the researchers.

Contents

Acronyms

Acronym	Meaning
CAT	Change Agent Training
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CS	Case Study
CWD	Children With Disability
DL	Distance Learning
DPAM	Development Policy and Management
GDM	Global Programme in Development Management (Postgraduate Diploma and MSc in Development Management at the OU)
IET	Institute of Educational Technology (at the OU)
MBA	Masters in Business Administration (at UNISA SBL)
MDASA	Managing Development Agencies in Southern Africa (the teaching partnership between OU and ZOU for the Postgraduate Diploma and MSc in Development Management)
MPS	Masters in Policy Studies (at SAPES Trust)
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
OD	Organization Development
OU	Open University
OUBS	Open University Business School
QSN	Quaker Service Norway
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SAPES Trust	Southern Africa Political Economy Series Trust
SBL	School of Business Leadership (the part of UNISA that teaches the MBA programme)
SOL	Supported Open Learning
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNISA	University of South Africa
ZOU	Zimbabwe Open University

Note to acronyms

For ease of reference throughout this report, the acronyms used to refer to the institutions and programmes are generally OU, SAPES Trust, UNISA and ZOU, although we do occasionally refer to the specific programme (GDM, MPS, MBA and MDASA). SAPES Trust is abbreviated to SAPES in the tables and to refer to specific case studies involving SAPES Trust students. ZOU case studies are referred to by the programme name, MDASA. Note that MDASA was a partnership programme between ZOU and the OU UK, in which students were officially registered at, and gained their qualifications from, the OU. ZOU was also a partner in the research project. Thus the data about the students on that programme are referred to separately from the OU global programme students, given the specific situation of their study programme, which is outlined in this report.

Abstract

This research investigates the impact of postgraduate programmes in Development Policy and Management (DPAM) on individual students and on the organizations in which they work. Such programmes have the potential to enhance the capacities of individuals working in a range of organizations directed to poverty reduction, development and wealth creation, from development NGOs to commercial enterprises.

Evaluations carried out by educational institutions of student' responses to, and performance in, programmes of study are common. Much less is known about the impact of the programmes on students' work performance, and less still on whether and how programmes of study carried out by staff members can have a wider impact on organizational capacity-building and change, and the conditions under which such effects might occur. Lessons can be learned for a range of policy arenas: how to improve (and measure) the effectiveness of educational programmes in DPAM; the conditions under which managers and development managers can enhance their individual work performance; mechanisms through which organizations can benefit and build on the effects of staff development programmes for capacity-building; the contexts and settings in which donor agencies and other development organizations can enhance capacity-building for poverty reduction and development by supporting particular kinds of education and training programmes.

The study focused on four programmes in DPAM, three in Southern Africa and one in the UK with a global reach. Three were distance learning programmes and one was block release. All the programmes were informed by an interactive approach and a reflective practitioner philosophy in which course content informs practice and students' experience is brought to bear on their understandings and use of course content. The study used a survey of students and their line managers (or colleagues who knew their work well), and case studies of students and organizations known to have built capacity and/or brought about changes as a result of students being on a programme. The purpose of the case studies was not simply to corroborate or deepen the survey evidence, but to investigate how capacity-building and change comes about.

The research was also informed by theories of interactive, experiential learning and recent literature on learning in organizations. A framework of analysis was developed, which saw the learning and application as taking place through interactions between students and programmes, between students' learning and their own work, and between individual and organizational learning. The research used two models of how learning is applied. One was a linear model, where knowledge gained from programmes of study is directly transferred to work practice. The other was an action learning approach in which both individual and organizational learning occur through cycles of action and reflection, crucially involving key interactions with other people and the needs of the organization. Although it was assumed that both models would be present, a question for the research was whether one model was more valid than the other and under what conditions.

In relation to responses to the programmes and performance at work, the majority of respondents said that they applied their learning quite a lot or a lot. They also gave high scores for many aspects of how they had benefited from the programmes of study and how the programmes had changed them or enhanced their capacities. Of those able to apply their learning, the most respondents thought they had been able to make specific contributions to their organizations' work, while a lesser number had been able to make strategic contributions. The latter was related to students' status in their organizations and the size of organization.

Two broad kinds of learning and application were identified: new knowledge and particular skill areas, and general types of change, such as gaining confidence, being more strategic,

changing management styles, and being better able to cope with change. These positive results were confirmed by line managers, although the organizational conditions for study and application of learning were seen rather differently by the two sets of respondents. Line managers tended to see the overall conditions of support for staff development and for applying learning more positively than the students. Students did experience some difficulties in applying their learning, and this was borne out to some extent by the case studies, even though they were of positive experiences overall. Much depended on the opportunities that students had to apply their learning, the possibilities of working with others to bring about change, and a positive organizational environment (including a changing organization), as well as the more obvious point of a student's status (although studying enabled students to improve their status in the organization in many cases).

The case studies provided a range of conditions and contexts and hence a number of different patterns or ways in which learning and application led to organizational capacity-building and change:

- change in a small organization where the director is a student, and where change throughout the whole organization is possible;
- constrained change within a large organization (usually confined to the student's own unit);
- planned improvement in organizational capacity to deliver change (often the organization has a staff development strategy which includes education and training in DPAM);
- specific ideas or frameworks being used for new organizational policies (the application of new knowledge or techniques as a way of resolving particular problems)
- changing organizational culture (usually involving changes in management styles to more consultative and open approaches);
- better coping with forced change (many organizations are having to change as a result of external factors and processes - the case studies provided examples of how students were able to assist their organizations in coping with these changes).

Again, both linear transfer of knowledge and action learning were noted in the case studies. The study suggests that the use of either model may depend on context and interpretation, and that educational programmes and organizations wishing to build capacity should allow for both types of process.

The study arrives at a set of policy issues and recommendations for consideration by educational programmes in terms of programme design, links to organizations building capacity through staff development programmes and links between organizations needing to enhance capacity in DPAM and donor and funding agencies that can support such processes. In particular, it is proposed that DPAM is encouraged to develop as a professional field, in which knowledge can be shared and build within and across organizations through learning communities and communities of practice.

1 Report Summary

1.1 KEY OUTCOMES

This study investigated the impact of postgraduate educational programmes in development policy and management (DPAM). How can such programmes be used to build organizational and institutional capacities for development, as well as achieve individual learning? The study focused on four educational programmes, three based in Southern Africa, and used survey and case study techniques to answer this question.

Key outcomes of the research are:

1 There is evidence of two kinds of learning processes: direct transfers of knowledge (concepts, frameworks, skills and techniques) to students' own work; and action learning cycles taking place in interactions between students and other staff in their organizations around organizational needs, leading in some cases to wider organizational learning.

2 The main elements conducive to individual learning and capacity-building, and improved performance in the workplace, are:

- relevance of the programme content to the work situation;
- interactive and experiential learning processes;
- deep learning approaches and positive approaches to work on the part of students.

These last elements support and reinforce the interaction between learning and application or practice.

3 The main elements conducive to programmes having an impact on organizational capacities for development include:

- ongoing processes of change in the organization that enable students to contribute from their learning;
- opportunities provided by the organizations for the students to contribute;
- means for students to work with others to bring about change both in learning communities and communities of practice;
- a positive and flexible organizational environment.

The status of students in the organization is also a key factor - middle managers in large or bureaucratic organizations have the most difficulty in influencing organizational practices and change. Depending on the student's position in their organization and the nature of change already under way, there are a number of very different patterns or ways in which educational programmes enable their participants to influence their organizations.

4 A proportion of students is unable to apply their learning directly. These students may nevertheless be building up capacity for DPAM which could be applied in new contexts later.

Policy implications of the research include:

- The need for more and better interactive and experiential programmes of study in DPAM as part of building capacities for poverty reduction and development.
- Greater collaboration between donors, educationalists and organizations wishing to build capacities for development.
- The suggestion that organizations wishing to enhance their capacities for development work should go beyond simply sponsoring staff and giving them time to study courses in DPAM, by providing real opportunities to apply their learning, reflect on the results and incorporate positive outcomes into organizational practice and policy.
- The nurturing of learning communities and communities of practice within and across organizations and national boundaries, to create change agents in DPAM and a growing

professional field of learning and practice.

1.2 BACKGROUND

The research is intended to help improve educational programmes that teach skills for DPAM. It contributes directly and indirectly to the overall aim of poverty reduction by suggesting how capacity-building can be reinforced in government institutions, development organizations and commercial enterprises in the forefront of social and economic change. It is particularly addressed to MDG 8: 'Develop a Global Partnership for Development'.

The study involved a partnership between The Open University, UK (OU) and three Southern African institutions: Southern Africa Political Economy Series (SAPES) Trust, Zimbabwe Open University and University of South Africa (UNISA) School of Business Leadership. The study focused on postgraduate programmes based on interactive and experiential teaching and learning. The programmes chosen were aimed primarily at mature managers and policy-makers in sectors of organizational life that contribute directly and indirectly to development and poverty reduction - state, private and NGO. The programmes combined theory with practical skills, and used the participants' own experience as well as case studies as sources of empirical materials for analysis and reflection. They included one block-release programme and three distance learning programmes, with the subject focus within DPAM varying from development management to business administration and regional policy studies.

The research combined survey and case study analysis. The survey resulted in a database of 354 valid student responses and 81 from their line managers (or others who knew their work). There were 18 detailed case studies of students and their organizations where there had been positive impacts, to examine the mechanisms through which the programmes had achieved this positive outcome.

Underlying the research design were two contesting views of learning and its application: the linear and the interactive. The linear view (*'transfer of knowledge'*) assumes that educational programmes may impart learning to individuals, who may in turn transfer their acquired knowledge to their organization and apply their learnt skills in that context, resulting in improved organizational capacity (which may have a positive impact on development). In the alternative view (*'action learning'*), individual and organizational learning are both conceived as cycles which reinforce each other in 'learning interactions' where individuals act to apply learning and organizations may incorporate these actions into organizational learning. In this view, it is also assumed that there will be a positive impact on development, through further interactions with the wider context.

1.3 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

1.3.1 Student characteristics

Most respondents were 30 years old and above, and were middle and senior managers. One third worked for NGOs, followed by the private sector, state and parastatals, inter-governmental organizations and donor agencies. The main areas of work were training, community development, lobbying and advocacy, research, as well as public services, commercial business and emergency relief.

1.3.2 Responses to the programmes

Most respondents were studying for professional and personal development; some wanted to improve their career prospects in their current organizations and others wanted to change

careers. The large majority had chosen the particular programme of study. Line managers indicated that students were supported in various ways by their organizations but this was not so strongly evident from student responses. The vast majority of respondents enjoyed the programmes of study and gave high scores for quality and relevance. Scores for teaching and learning support were not so high. However in correlating these results with the extent to which students were able to apply their learning at work, teaching and learning support were not significant variables (in contrast to relevance of content). Students also gave high scores for mental stimulation, personal growth, being informed about ideas, practices and conceptual frameworks, and being encouraged to engage in self-development. However, in terms of career prospects, although some students had gained promotion or moved to other jobs, few had gained higher salaries.

1.3 3 Learning and working styles

Most students categorise themselves as deep learners (compared with strategic and surface learners), although the results show that students adopt a range of learning styles. Learning styles and positive approaches to work are significantly correlated, and a higher percentage of deep than strategic and surface learners were able to apply their learning at work.

1.3.4 Learning and performance at work

The majority of students had been able to apply their learning at work to some extent, and also thought that they had been able to improve their practices and performance. In particular, respondents thought that they had become more reflective learners, put forward ideas more, made more decisions, took more responsibility and analysed and investigated before acting. Compared with their European counterparts, Southern African students seemed to apply their learning more through working in teams and being more consultative. In open-ended responses, qualitative changes in performance included: using particular skills and techniques that students had learnt in the courses more critically and confidently; managing change better; carrying out more effective planning; working better and being more professional with clients, beneficiaries and donors and delivering results; being more strategic; formulating and carrying out better policy; managing conflict; being more innovative; taking a more prominent and leading role. Statistical analysis indicated that satisfaction with the programme of study and the relevance of the content for the work situation were important factors in the extent to which students both enhanced their performance and were able to apply their learning at work.

Evidence from the case studies gave prominence to the more general mechanisms through which students' performance had improved. The application of specific tools or knowledge was cited in several cases, but there were several more important, general ways in which this improvement had occurred:

- Increasing confidence
- Taking a strategic view
- A changed, more open, management style
- Building on previous experience
- Ability to cope better with both planned and forced change

In the case studies, students provided evidence for both the linear and the interactive views of learning. There were many clear examples of learning interactions, some required by the design of the educational programme itself (an assignment which required the student to apply something in the workplace), and others initiated by the student or the organization where the student’s learning was brought to bear on a particular problem. However, there were also many examples of direct application of knowledge or skills.

-

To some extent these are two modes of learning and application which work best for different areas or topics. More generally, they are different ways of interpreting a complex process. Although the idea of transfer of knowledge works to some extent it is not a sufficient explanation by itself. The important point here is the validity of the action learning framework. The idea that individual and organizational learning from two interlocking cycles of action and reflection is extremely useful for focusing attention on how learning, application and organizational capacity building occur and on the importance of the quality of 'learning interactions'.

1.3.5 Impact on organizational capacity

At the level of organizational impact, from the survey, higher percentages of respondents had been able to contribute to specific areas of their organizations' work as a result of their learning than to strategic areas. The latter is correlated with status in the organization. Specific contributions included: own performance enhancement, management of workload, improving internal relationships in the work group, and performance of own work group or team. Strategic contributions included: team work in the organization, managing information, communication and communication systems, planning and budgeting, organizational strategy and dealing with clients and beneficiaries. Students shared their knowledge in meetings or by explaining particular techniques, both to their peers and to those higher up the organizational hierarchy. Contributions to organizational capacity-building and change were significantly associated with such variables as own approaches to work, status in the organization, working with others to bring about changes and sharing knowledge, a positive organizational environment and processes of change already taking place in the organization to which the student could contribute. These associations all suggest that collegial approaches to work, learning communities and communities of practice may all be important for organizations to reap the benefits of students' learning.

The case studies were located in a range of contexts: type and size of organization, location and role of organization, and position of the staff member studying. In addition, the nature of organizational change already taking place was extremely varied. In several cases there were large external changes driving organizational change, such as privatization of state organizations, post-apartheid racial balancing, in impact of AIDS, and food security crises. In other cases there was planned change already in train: new country programmes, localization of offices, staff development and internal capacity building, and a merger in one case. In many cases, change combined both categories. Thus organizations were forced to respond to external changes but were trying to plan their response.

This variety meant it was difficult to find general ways in which changes could be attributed to the programmes. The individual student or groups of students played quite different roles in different cases, depending largely on their position in the organization and how this factor combined with the character of ongoing change to determine how much potential there was for that student to use their learning to influence that change. The most constrained were middle managers within large organizations where there was little local flexibility. Those with most opportunity to shape change were directors of small organizations or heads of units.

In addition, many students moved jobs or even organizations, either as a result of their study increasing their capacity or their employability or simply in the normal course of life or career progression. Many of these students clearly benefited from their studies in terms of increased capacity in DPAM. There were cases where they were able to apply their learning later in another context, and it is likely that many more ex-students will be able to do this in due time.

Thus a number of distinct patterns emerged from the case studies which combined the impact of studies on students' performance in their work with wider impact on organizational capacity in different ways:

- Change in small organizations where the director is a student.
- Constrained change within a large or bureaucratic organization
- Planned improvement in organizational capacity to deliver change
- Specific ideas or frameworks being used for new organizational policies
- Changing organizational culture
- Better coping with forced change

Very often organizational change is occurring already and students' learning serves either to give them confidence or otherwise helps them to cope. There is not necessarily any question of students proactively causing change. Students' learning may give them and their organizations increased capacity to cope with change whether or not they are actually called upon to use it.

1.3.5 Conclusions

The most important factors that affect the outcomes of learning for building capacities in students *and* their organizations seem to be:

- Interactive and experiential programme design
- Programme content
- The characteristics of students as learners
- The organizational context in which students work (including existing change processes)
- The status of students in their organizations
- The opportunities to apply learning.

Organizational change assists individual learning in many ways; individual learning can also assist organizational change.

From the case studies and survey together, an optimum scenario can be proposed for maximising the benefits of education programmes in building capacity at both individual and organizational levels. This optimum scenario would include, for the student:

- deep and strategic approaches to study;
- positive approaches to work.

It would also include (more in the control of the educational institutions and organizations):

- relevant programme content for work practices;
- support for students from their organizations and opportunities to apply their learning;
- means of sharing knowledge and working together in communities of practice.

1.4 POLICY ISSUES

1.4.1 Programme design

There is a need to think further about the design and implementation of interactive and experiential programmes of study: in terms of their learning objectives, how to encourage particular learning styles, how to evaluate and determine the effectiveness of such programmes, and how to enhance their potential, for example, by electronic means. Although the relevance of programme content to work needs is associated with the application of learning, the range of professional 'contents' are beyond any particular programme. In addition, students will often apply their learning in new contexts, so there can never be a complete match between curriculum and learning needs. Facilitating 'learning interactions' in different organizational contexts can fill this gap by enabling students to bring reflection on real experiences into the educational programme, as can enabling the development of learning communities or communities of practice.

1.4.2 Links between programmes and organizations

The involvement of user organizations in programme design is an important policy consideration. However there are transaction costs involved in building relationships with employer or user organizations, as well as the likely increased benefits to students' learning and organizational capacities. Although the benefits may not be reaped directly by the educational institution, as they may not translate into traditional measures of educational performance, there will be indirect benefits for the reputation of the educational institution or programme.

1.4.3 Organizational dynamics

Many staff were sponsored by their organizations as part of staff development programmes, often in the context of planned change, or planning in relation to coping with forced change. From using programmes in DPAM as a means to develop the capacities of individual staff, and thereby enhance the capacities of the organization, this study suggests that the organization itself needs to learn from the programmes. One mechanism for this to occur is by providing opportunities for the staff in training to work with others to make changes, in 'learning communities' and 'communities of practice'. In supporting such processes, organizations as well as individuals can learn. However such situations can be seen as threats as well as opportunities. An overall positive organizational environment that allows for openness and dialogue is important, as well as broader mechanisms for organizational learning.

1.4.4 Going beyond organizations

The best programmes will include a range of mechanisms to assist students to learn and build their developmental capacities irrespective of organizational context. Such provision should be an educational aim, given that not all students will be well supported by their employers, or in positions where they can implement direct practical applications of their learning. There is a need for DPAM to become a recognised field of study and practice which transcends organizational and national boundaries, and helps to create and reinforce change agents and leaders with particular values and skills.

1.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

1.5.1 Educationalists and institutions that teach programmes in DPAM

- Different types of interactive and experiential learning need to be promoted, linked to particular professional needs and contexts.
- Educational programmes should try to encourage organizations to provide opportunities for applying learning as well as practical support.
- Those providing educational programmes in DPAM should encourage learning communities and communities of practice, either within single organizations or across several organizations in a sector, including alumni associations.
- The relevance of content imported from other educational programmes should be enhanced with materials focusing on locally pertinent issues, cases and examples. A more collaborative approach across to course development across national boundaries is needed.
- Teaching and research programmes should inform each other - both in content and approaches - just as practice informs learning and learning informs practice.
- Educational institutions should seek to build wide impact assessment on individual and organizational capacities into their reviews and evaluations of particular programmes.

1.5.2 Organizations and enterprises requiring staff with DPAM skills

- Organizations should provide support to students as part of a staff development package, including briefing line managers, providing mentors and enabling opportunities to apply learning.
- Organizations should provide a place in the organization for communities of practice that cut across the organizational structures and teams, include those who are following courses of study or training as well as staff experienced in a particular area of practice.

1.5.3 Donors and sponsors supporting capacity-building through education and training

- Capacity-building in organizations that are fighting poverty, as well as in organizations needed for the supply of goods and services and general wealth creation, should be an integral part of donor support for education and training.
- Donors can assist capacity building in public and private sector organizations through bursary schemes combined with promotion and support for learning communities or communities of practice that will enable a wider organizational impact.

2 Introduction

This study focuses on the impact of four postgraduate programmes in Development Policy and Management (DPAM) - on students participating in the programmes and on the organizations for which the students work. The intention of such educational programmes is to enhance the skills and capacities of those working in development, in government, non-governmental and private sectors. This study, however, is concerned with wider organizational effects, as well as the extent to which skills and capacities are enhanced in individuals. Furthermore, it explores whether engagement with educational programmes by individuals and organizations can lead to changes that go beyond skill and capacity enhancement, for example, new perspectives on development or organizational change.

The study adds to knowledge in the following ways. First, it provides insights into the extent to which postgraduate, professional programmes have an impact on individual capacities. It also identifies the features of such programmes and the mechanisms through which they achieve this impact. Second, it shows some of the ways that organizations can benefit from having members of staff studying on such programmes. Third, it suggests conditions under which having staff members studying on programmes in DPAM can lead to changes in the organization - maybe intended or unintended. In this respect, it also indicates some of the limitations of the impact and the changes that can be achieved. Finally, the results of the study point to ways that educationalists, employer organizations and those working in policy can enhance capacity-building in Development Policy and Management.

This study will thus be of practical use to education providers, and enable them to reflect on programme design and improvement. Equally, it will help development and business organizations provide the most supportive contexts for application and transfer of learning to enhance organizational and institutional capacities, and so contribute to poverty reduction and wealth creation. The research findings underline the importance of building learning networks and 'communities of practice' within and between development organizations, ministries and other organizations. We hope they will provide a basis for north-south/south-north collaboration on programme enhancement and for further research.

There is a particular need to address the first of the skill shortages identified by a DFID Education Department's *Skills for Development* Strategy Paper of 16 June 2000, which states:

> 'In most developing countries, … [i]ndividuals in central government, the public services, civil society and private businesses are often unable either to identify priorities and policies, or to manage and implement agreed plans.'

Thus, within the overall context of 'capacity-building' - both in individuals and organizations - contributes to all the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (a point made at the 2003 'Oxford Conference' on Education and Development). However, the goal above all which this study supports is:

Goal 8. Develop a Global Partnership for Development.

2.1 STUDY OBJECTIVES AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The objectives of the study were to:

1. assess the effectiveness of educational programmes in development policy and management in terms of both individual learning and building organizational and institutional capacities;

2. identify how features of such programmes interact with individuals and the social and organizational context of learning to enhance skills and capabilities;

3. identify how individual learning translates into improving the capacities for development policy and management in the organizations in which the students work, and the most facilitative contexts;

4. develop a framework for assessing educational programmes for development skills that is based on inter-organizational relations and context as well as educational practice and innovation;

5. facilitate collaboration between institutions involved in educational programmes in development policy and management, so that they can use the findings to increase the effectiveness of their programmes.

The research was carried out by a partnership between four institutions and investigated the following taught postgraduate programmes:

- Southern African Political Economy Series (SAPES) Trust, Zimbabwe: Masters in Policy Studies - a regional programme;
- University of South Africa (UNISA), School of Business Leadership (SBL): Masters in Business Administration;
- Zimbabwe Open University (ZOU), Managing Development Agencies in Southern Africa programme (MDASA): MSc in Development Management, taught in conjunction with the OU UK;
- Open University, UK (OU), Global Programme in Development Management (GDM): MSc in Development Management - an international programme[1].

All programmes are for part-time students who study while continuing to work. Three of the programmes use distance learning, while the SAPES Trust programme has a block release system.

The research project sought to answer the following questions:

(i) How do those responsible for educational programmes in development policy and management see the design and running of these programmes in practice? What are their expectations and practices, and how do they perceive the outcomes?

(ii) How do students interact, on one hand, with the educational programme in terms of their learning needs and outcomes, and, on the other, with the organization they work for in terms of changing capacities in development policy and management? To what extent is the individual able to change organizational practices and to what is this attributable?

(iii) To what extent do the students' organizations consciously engage with the educational programme and the learning process of students, and change practices as a result of the students' work? Is the extent to which an organization learns and innovates attributable to its engagement with educational programmes?

(iv) How can educational programmes directed to skills for development best enable and enhance organizational and institutional change?

Question (i) formed part of the background discussions between the research partners in the four educational institutions prior to the rest of the investigation. It permeates the analysis of

[1] It was not originally intended to include the OU's own programme, although it is global, most students are working in development organizations, and many are based in or are nationals from developing countries; its inclusion was mainly at the instigation of the partners and logistically supported by the OU's Institute of Educational Technology; it provided useful comparative data.

questions (ii) and (iii). Question (iv) was not investigated directly but we reflect on it in the light of data gathered in answer to questions (ii) and (iii).

Overall, the study provides a more nuanced approach to educational impact than the usual measurement of performance by course results. But more importantly, it provides a platform for designing and planning better use of programmes in DPAM for capacity-building, both in educational institutions and organizations targeted by DPAM programmes.

2.2 OUTLINE OF THE REPORT

The report is structured as follows:

Section 3 reviews some of the key debates on individual and organizational learning, and outlines the model we used in the study.

Section 4 explains our methodology and how the study developed.

Sections 5 and 6 are the body of our report and present our main findings. *Section 5* examines the students' responses to and engagement with the educational programmes, and looks at the relationship between learning from the programmes and individual performance at work. *Section 6* analyses the relationship between individual learning and organizational capacity building and change - under what contextual conditions and how such capacity-building and change occur.

In *Section 7*, we discuss the policy issues raised this study and how they might be taken forward.

3 Building capacity through education for DPAM: concepts and issues

Behind this research is an interest in the effects of applied programmes of study in development policy and management, whether such programmes have a direct effect on capacity-building, and, if they do, how that occurs. Relevant and appropriately designed educational and training programmes that have a direct bearing and input into improving skills and capacities required for managing development and poverty reduction are needed in many arenas: central and regional government, non-governmental organizations and international agencies, and for those working in public-private or state-civil society partnerships, and as private consultants. The aim of such education must be both to benefit individual students and to encourage and enable them to apply their learning to their work – not simply as individual actors but as part of organizations and groups through which the impact of the programmes may have greater effect.

If the intention of such educational programmes is to contribute to development in various ways and to enhance the skills and capabilities of those working in development, to what extent does this occur in practice? Do students apply what they have learnt? Is there is a wider effect, or are the benefits limited solely to the students? How can educationalists improve the programmes? How can organizations whose staff study on such programmes best benefit from them? How can donors support and take advantage of the education and training for development provided by such programmes?

Our initial thinking was based on issues and questions arising from previous evaluations and studies of educational programmes in the Open University UK, in particular on the application and impact of skills acquired in the course of study. Many students report applying their skills, and employers also attribute organizational capacity-building to students' participation in education programmes (e.g. Webber and Chatiza, 2000, and studies of the impact of Open University Business School courses in the UK, Europe, the Middle East and Africa such as Farnes, 1993; Lewis and Tyler, 1999; Tyler, 2000). However, not much has been done to investigate these reported applications further, particularly how such application occurs and whether and how organizations change as a result.

Another issue that influenced our thinking was the question of how to measure the effectiveness of educational programmes, particularly those that are designed to develop professional skills. As mentioned in the introduction to this report, three of the programmes in this study use distance learning and the fourth employs a block release system. In applied fields such as DPAM, the effectiveness of distance education, in particular (however measured), is generally attributed to the design of programmes around principles of experiential learning and reflection (Kolb, 1984; Schön, 1983). However, programme evaluations do not conclusively demonstrate that this is why students can or do apply their skills. Other factors are known to influence how well skills are learnt and applied, notably individual characteristics and differences in the social and organizational context of learning, such as the degree of material and other support given to the student by the employer. For example, an OU study of IBM managers, which developed a framework based on theories of social learning (Bandura, 1977, 1986; Vygotsky, 1991), found that aspects of social and organizational context were important to the transfer of learning to the workplace. However, there was no relationship between academic performance and workplace outcomes – in other words, students might exhibit average performance in their studies but be outstanding managers. This finding was echoed in a study of rural community development students at the University of Natal (Luckett, pers. com. 2000[2]). Students on community-based internships were able to apply course concepts in their work and the communities perceived their

[2] Personal Communication from Sid Luckett, University of Natal, School of Rual Community Development, Pietermaritzburg, Private Bag X01, Scottsville, 3209, South Africa, August 2000.

interventions as beneficial. However this effect had no relationship with students' assignment grades.

Thus one can see the application of new knowledge and skills, or changes in behaviour and approach in practice, as evidence of the effectiveness of a programme of study, even if there are many other factors and processes involved than the simple fact of studying. Long ago, John Dewey theorized the thinking about experiential approaches to education and the relationship between education, personal development and work (Dewey, 1938). However, from the point of view of our study, how one identifies and measures personal and professional development, and how one determines whether there has been a wider organizational effect were key considerations. We turned to a number of ideas about learning and building capacity to develop our own framework for investigation.

First, an Open University definition of learning states that it is 'an active process in which meanings are constructed by the learner as they interact with and internalise the substance of the teaching they encounter'(Baker et al, 1996, p.102). Students are seen as building on and transforming existing knowledge and skills, '[integrating] new and old knowledge in ways that demonstrate a personal grasp and an ability to apply their knowledge to new contexts' (ibid). In professionally-oriented programmes, such a process requires students to apply course concepts, skills and techniques to their own workplace in assignments - that is, to become a 'reflective practitioner'.

Then we looked more closely at the ideas of experiential learning and reflective practice as developed by Kolb (1984) and Schön (1983), in particular Kolb's notion of an experiential learning cycle. Kolb's idea of learning is that it is 'the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience' (ibid, p.38). Thus an experiential learning cycle involves concrete experience, reflection on experience, abstract conceptualization of experience, and active experimentation (in our case, application). Kolb aligns concrete experience and abstract conceptualization of that experience in one dimension, and reflection and action in another. The first is about comprehension and the second concerns transformation. One might thus assume that comprehension is largely measured by course results (although there are undoubtedly other measures that could be used), while transformation is measured by personal and professional development and application of learning in the workplace. Our study is concerned with both these dimensions to some extent, although predominantly with transformation.

However, we also wished to investigate to what extent organizations, as opposed to individuals, had built capacity and/or changed as a result of members of staff applying their learning. This is a difficult arena and this study has only had partial success in grappling with it at the empirical level. At the theoretical level, we continued our exploration of experiential or action learning cycles by borrowing from the work of Argyris and Schön (1993), who make the link between individual and organizational learning in the following way:

> 'Organizational learning occurs when individuals within an organization experience a problematic situation and inquire into it on the organization's behalf. They experience a surprising mismatch between expected and actual results of action and respond to that mismatch through a process of thought and further action that leads them to modify their images of organization or their understandings of organizational phenomena and to restructure their activities so as to bring outcomes and expectations into line, thereby changing organizational theory-in-use. In order to become organizational, the learning that results from organizational inquiry must become embedded in the images of organization held by its members' minds and/or in the epistemological artefacts (the maps, memories, and programs) embedded in the organizational environment' (ibid, p.16).

There are two aspects of Argyris' and Schön's approach that provide useful perspectives for our study. The first is that they analyse learning and its effects in terms of feedback loops. Not only is this helpful in thinking about 'process' - how does learning occur and how do things change? - but Argyris' and Schön's categorization of single, double and triple loop learning can help us think about different types of learning and individual and organizational applications arising from educational programmes. Single loop learning suggests that individuals and organizations learn to do better what they were doing before (for example in enhancing organizational processes, skills and techniques, including areas such as better leadership and management). Double-loop learning implies that individuals and organizations re-conceptualise or redefine their previous actions and behaviours and do things differently from before (which may also lead to changes in organizational processes and techniques, including leadership and management, but may also result in the organization taking a different direction; equally, if only in the individual and not the organization, double loop learning may lead an individual to leave the organization as personal/professional goals and processes and organizational goals processes may be too divergent). Triple loop learning is about learning how to learn. In that instance, we may be concerned with an individual's learning process (in some ways associated with Entwistle's category of deep learning [Entwistle, 1994], which we come to below). However, Argyris' and Schön's main concern was whether organizations could learn to learn - i.e. to become learning organizations as opposed to engaging in organizational learning. It might be too much to claim that educational programmes can induce organizations to become learning organizations. It is more likely that through processes of the sort outlined in the passage from Argyris and Schön above, they might influence different aspects of organizational learning through the actions of individual employees.

Thus we cannot pretend that this investigation has been able to follow through all the ramifications and processes of relating individual and organizational learning. In some ways we are touching the surface and providing pointers for further study that might use different methods from those we were able to employ in this case (see Section 4). We did however take our thinking further in relation to individual learning processes and the relationship between individual and organizational learning. Finally, we developed our own framework for use in this study, which we outline at the end of this section.

In terms of individual learning, we returned to some of the Open University's thinking on teaching and learning. How do we know what kind of learning is taking place among individual students and is there a relationship between kinds of learning and the extent to which students apply their learning at work? Whatever the answer to this question, it has policy implications for programme design and tuition. As mentioned above, we used Entwistle's categories of deep, strategic and surface learning as indicators in relation to individual learning styles. The 'constructivist account of learning' embedded in the quote from Baker et al above, implies certain demands on learners in higher education, and Entwistle's categorization encapsulates the demands as follows:

> 'The deep approach focuses on the structure of the study material and attempts to reconstruct the relationships and overall meaning of the whole.
> The surface approach is characterised by a focus on isolated details of what is being studied, with effort being given to memorizing details rather than identifying the concepts and relationships that tie the details together into the whole.
> The strategic approach is driven primarily by the student's desire to achieve, and therefore to meet the requirements of assessment as a priority' (Atkins et al, 2002, p.126, Box 5).

We do not claim that this is the only way to analyse learning styles, and we will see from our data that individuals often adopt a mixture of learning styles. However, we might hypothesize that deep and possibly strategic learning are more likely to lead to application than surface learning. Furthermore the sense of deep learning is much more closely associated with the

Kolb view of experiential learning as transformation than the other learning styles, and in that way too might be expected to be associated with individual efforts to build capacity and bring about change.

With respect to organizational learning, there is now a considerable literature with respect to organizations in general and to some extent development organizations in particular. Since the 1980s, there has been a growing literature on learning through and from development processes (for example, Korten, 1984; White, 1987; Hulme, 1989; Rondinelli, 1993). There has also been a growth of literature on capacity-building within development organizations as well as the role of capacity-building in development, partly inspired by systems thinkers such as Argyris and Schön and Morgan (1986). Ideas from this literature have been used to inform proposals for change in development organizations, in turn fuelled by the desire to relinquish some of the practices associated historically with voluntarism and create development professionalism through better management (or better development management). This literature increasingly emanates from development organizations as well as academic arenas. The 2002 double issue of the journal, *Development in Practice*, on 'Development and the Learning Organization' is an example of a shared discourse.

Educational programmes are of course located in the arena of professionalization, learning and building capacity in development organizations. Hailey and James point out that successful South Asian NGOs have invested in 'formal processes to capture and disseminate learning' including training, research and staff development (2002, p.403). Although Hailey's and James's work on 'learning leaders' underlines the importance of leadership in organizational learning and change, not all students on postgraduate educational programmes are leaders. So how do they, as individual workers, influence the collectivities in which they work?

Our own exploration of this process led us to reflect on the idea of 'communities of practice' theorised by Wenger (1998). Wenger suggests that 'collective learning results in practices that reflect both the pursuit of our enterprises and the attendant social relations. These practices are thus the property of a kind of community created over time by the sustained pursuit of a shared enterprise' (ibid, p.45). Wenger suggests we need to rethink learning, for individuals, communities and organizations to take these social processes into account. However, in the world of development policy and management, the shared enterprise involves external social goals (Thomas, 1996) as well internal organizational ones, and may involve conflicting values and interests as well as limited control over outcomes because of the number of different actors engaged in this social arena (ibid). Even so, as will be indicated by subsequent sections of this report, learning communities and communities of practice seemed to be an important component in the link between individual learner and the possibilities for bring about change and building capacity in their organizations. Furthermore, although the project did not start out with Wenger's perspectives in mind, elements of his ideas inform the framework we used for our investigation and analysis.

Wenger suggests that learning is central to the social order (and thus to changing the social order): 'theorizing about one is tantamount to theorising about the other' (ibid, p. 15).[3] Learning and communities of practice are closely intertwined: communities of practice have a temporal dimension and 'can be thought of as shared histories of learning' (ibid, p. 86): 'learning is the engine of practice, and practice is the history of learning' (ibid, p.96). Both learning and communities of practice concern the production of meaning, which, for Wenger, involves participation of individuals and groups, and 'reification' or codification of practice. To develop communities of practice involves mutual engagement, a joint enterprise, and a 'shared repertoire' (ibid, pp.72-73). These dimensions are also required for learning: learning is a 'process of being engaged in, and participating in developing, an ongoing practice' (ibid,

[3] The idea that the sustainability of institutional change is based on learning has also been explored by one of the current researchers and a colleague (Johnson and Wilson, 1999, 2000).

p.95). Communities of practice may of course overlap. They may exist within and between organizations. They have boundaries, but the boundaries are permeable, and some people or groups, or some practices, may be on the periphery of communities of practice. However the constellations of communities of practice enable learning to take place locally and globally, particularly given the context of changing technologies and forms of communication.

A few comments are in order at this point. First, an underlying issue that emerged in this research is the relationship between tacit and codified knowledge when students are applying learning from education programmes. Many of the students are highly experienced professionals. The education programmes help them build on their experience (and possibly codify their tacit knowledge). But the distinction between old and new learning is not a clear one, and this in turn probably has a bearing on application of knowledge. Tacit knowledge is also collective or shared, of course. So there are also implications for the use of an individual's learning in a collectivity. Second, the relationship between global and local is an important dimension in the arena of development policy and management where organizations are as much concerned with the global as the local, both in their work and in those who might form different communities of practice. Equally, in the realm of ideas, tools and skills for development policy and management, the arenas are both global and local. Thus a potential contribution of education programmes such as those in this study may be to link the global and the local, and to help build communities of practice that straddle different contexts and arenas, not simply within organization.

Wenger also makes a link between learning, communities of practice and identity. For Wenger, identity involves: 'negotiated experience' – defining who we are through participation and reification; 'community membership' – distinguishing the familiar and unfamiliar; our learning trajectories – where we have been and where we are going; being members of multiple groups and how we reconcile those into our identities; ways of belonging to broader constellations of groups and discourses (the relationship between the local and the global). These aspects of identity parallel aspects of practice – negotiated meaning, community, shared histories of learning, boundaries, institutional landscapes and constellations of action (or practice). Again these are concerns for formal programmes of study and their links to the worlds of students and their organizations. How do the programmes speak to the practices, needs and identities of students in development policy and management? How do they contribute to building the practices and identities of organizations?

We were clearly not able to answer all the questions raised by the literature on the relationship between individual and organizational/collective learning in this study. In addition, we have to take into account individual students who are not in organizations, move between organizations, or hope to move into development organizations with new skills gained as a result of study. Then there is the important and probably common phenomenon of the individual who is unable to apply their learning in their organization, much as they might wish to, because of many reasons including position in the organization and lack of opportunity.[4]

However, in thinking through the issues raised by this literature, we developed our own framework for investigation that attempts to capture key processes. This framework involves analysing the relations between four[5] elements:

(i) the educational programme;

[4] The methodology of this study, which investigates individual experiences as well as generalised phenomena, is outlined in Section 4.

[5] Initially we developed the framework with just the first three elements, but the importance of adding the fourth quickly became apparent.

(ii) the individual student and her/his individual learning;

(iii) the student's work context and the organizational learning and capacity building occurring there as a result of skills applied; and

(iv) the arena of socio-economic development which provides the broader context of the organization's work and is where the impact of increased capacity in DPAM should be felt.

An initial assumption is that individual learning is expected to result from the educational programme, but will also be influenced by the organizational context and by characteristics of the individual. Similarly, organizational learning and capacity building may result from the individual transferring her or his acquired knowledge and applying learnt skills, but will also be influenced by the opportunities and constraints in the organizational and wider context and the design of the educational programme.

The central two elements, individual and organizational learning, are both conceived as cycles. These cycles reinforce each other at a point which represents social interactions in which individuals have the opportunity to apply learning and organizations may be able to incorporate the actions of individuals into organizational learning.

The framework is represented graphically in Figure 3.1, which shows the same four elements, marked A (educational programme), B (individual), C (organization) and D (political and economic environment). The individual learning and organizational capacity building at B and C respectively are represented by cycles. Both these cycles are regarded as happening continuously, irrespective of whether there is any input from an educational programme.

The individual learning cycle represents ongoing learning, in this case in relation to the application of skills and competencies in a work context. One can begin to explain it at any point. Box 3 represents the 'repertoire' of existing skills and that a person has at any time. The main context in which these skills and competencies are used at work is in interactions with people (Box 4). The individual can be thought of as choosing to use particular skills in situations that arise (e.g. using particular planning tools and participative methods when dealing with a community group; trying out ideas on motivation in an interview with a supervisee). The use of skills and competencies in these interactions will give rise to results for the individual (Box 5). The individual then reflects on what happened (Box 6) and builds or modifies their own personal 'theory-in-use', i.e. the way they explain and understand things privately. This could mean reinforcing the way the individual thinks things work (e.g. if the participative methods worked well they were probably based on a good theory of how participation works); or it could mean modifying their understanding (e.g. if the supervisee reacts very differently to what was expected then the ideas on motivation may have been incorrect). This in turn leads to the individual developing the skills and competencies in their repertoire (round the cycle to Box 3), possibly rejecting or changing certain ways of doing things if they lead consistently to poor results, while refining those that work well and continually improving them with more and more practice.

This cycle goes on continuously and is affected by the items in boxes 1 and 2, viz. the individual's own resources in terms of assets and existing capabilities[6] and their personal and professional objectives. The role of any educational programme includes adding possibilities to the repertoire for testing in real situations and rejecting or refining, as well as providing frameworks and concepts to assist in the process of reflection. In addition, it may be able to

[6] Box 1 represents individual characteristics (gender/age, educational history, learning style, social networks and status, etc.) which though not all completely unchangeable are relatively more 'fixed' over the longer term, compared to the 'repertoire' of skills in box 3 which can fairly readily be modified through learning.

promote interactive opportunities for testing the new additions to the repertoire (i.e. promote 'learning interactions', as explained below).

The cycle for organizational capacity building can be explained in a similar way. In this case it is results for the organization that are important, and organizational learning may take place as a result of collective reflection on those results. In a development organization, these results will impact on the political and economic environment, hopefully in the form of successful interventions to promote development. At the same time, the political and economic environment will constrain what the organization can achieve and also provide feedback which can be used in the process of organizational learning.

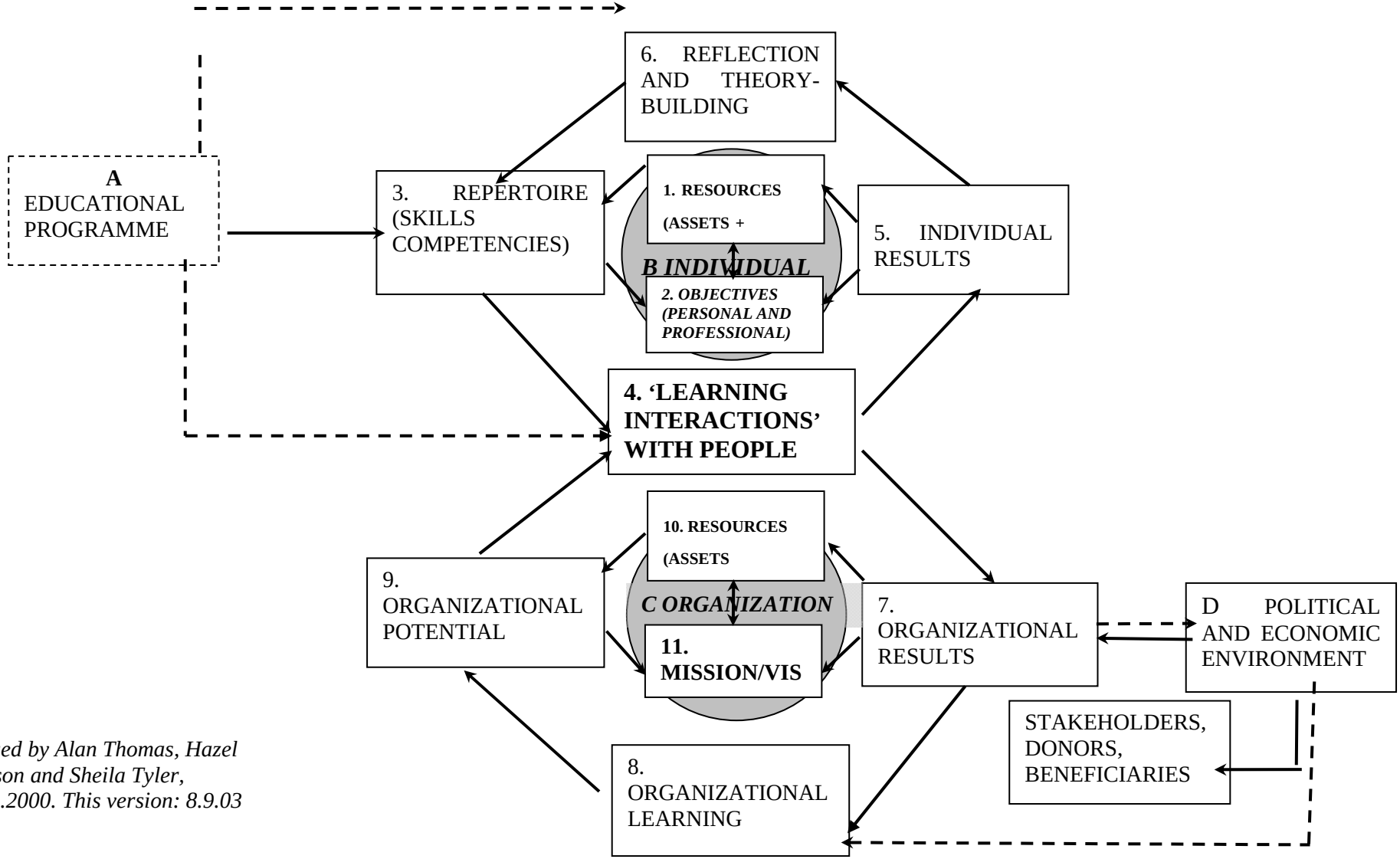
It is suggested that the quality of the social interactions at the point where individual and organizational learning cycles intersect will play a large part in determining the impact of the programmes in terms of increased capabilities in development policy and management. These 'learning interactions' also involve an interchange between codified knowledge (represented by course materials and curriculum) and tacit knowledge (participants' theories-in-use, routines and pre-existing portfolios of techniques).

Thus to understand how such capacity building can best be promoted, it is necessary to analyse how various factors affect these 'learning interactions'. Relevant factors can be found in relation to each of elements A, B and C in Figure 3.1. With respect to the educational programmes (A), they include curriculum content and design, particularly how learning activities are formulated to involve participants in relating course concepts to their own experience. Such a process may be in particular assignments and in opportunities for practical project work or policy-oriented dissertations (and the way these are supported)[7]. Then (B), individual characteristics such as learning style, as well as constraints on an individual such as their position in an organization and the extent and form of support from a participant's sponsoring organization, particularly where that organization is also their employer and the site for attempted capacity building in development, may also be influential. Other organizational factors (C) may include particular opportunities for application of learning in the organization, the extent to which students are able to work with others to bring about change, and a positive environment for new ideas and practices.

Thus, one objective of this research was to test the framework in Figure 3.1, and if necessary adapt it. After the next section, which presents our methodology, the following two sections look at the interactions within the three elements. Section 5 examines the interactions between programmes and students, whether and how students are able to apply their learning at work and how it affects their work performance (the interactions between A and B in Figure 3.1). Section 6 analyses the interaction between students' learning and the wider processes in their organizations, to see how, under what conditions and to what extent there is an impact on organizational capacity-building and change (C in Figure 3.1).

[7] Other aspects to examine are educational innovations such as the use of electronic conferencing, face-to-face simulations or exercises using web-based resources, although these were not of great importance with respect to the four programmes under study here.

FIGURE 3.1 AN ACTION LEARNING FRAMEWORK FOR 'CAPACITY BUILDING' PROCESS



Devised by Alan Thomas, Hazel Johnson and Sheila Tyler, 20.12.2000. This version: 8.9.03

4 Methodology and Methods

This section explains the general methodological approach and the specific methods used in the study. It also outlines how the methods changed in detail as the study developed. The investigation was designed as a combination of the following three major activities:

(i) A questionnaire survey of the students, focusing on learning outcomes and perceived impact on their organizations and the factors influencing these[8]. The survey included not only students from the southern African institutions, as originally planned, but also students from the OU's own development management programme. This was partly because the OU was itself very interested in the study, and partly because the southern African partners encouraged the OU to include its programme in the study on an equal basis with the other three.

(ii) A questionnaire survey of students' line managers or another person able to comment on the student's work and studies. In the early stages of the project, we expected to carry out semi-structured interviews of line managers or employers, but later decided to request the students surveyed to pass on a shorter questionnaire to their line managers. It was not expected to obtain a high response rate to this questionnaire, although the response rate was likely to be at least as high as our capacity to carry out semi-structured interviews.

(iii) Detailed case studies of a small number of students and organizations where substantial impact or revelatory events are reported (case studies by repute [Thomas, 1998]).

The student questionnaire aims to quantify the overall effectiveness of the four programmes, and to provide data on what particular aspects of the programmes, of the students' approaches to learning and to work, and of the organizational context seem to be most conducive to a positive impact of the programme and learning process. The line manager questionnaire and analysis are subsidiary, aimed mainly at corroborating the student questionnaire data. The case studies provide a means of explanation of the impact of learning on students and their organizations.

The methodology is thus based on gathering and analysing survey data to make generalizable propositions and explore general relationships combined with case study data on particular stories or experiences of the influence of formal learning on the student and the student's organization. The case studies are not simply to provide reinforcement of the generalizable data. The idea is that the two approaches also tell different stories. In particular, the case studies provide a different perspective on the individual and organizational learning process, and a means of explaining how the learning mechanisms and dynamics occur. This methodological approach is further explained in a concept paper on 'combined methods' (Thomas and Johnson, 2002).

4.1 THE SURVEY

A basic questionnaire design was prepared by the OU and then discussed with partners and piloted with students. The questionnaire went through several modifications including by the student survey team in the OU's Institute of Educational Technology (IET). It was intended that the questionnaire would be as similar as possible for each programme, while taking into account programme differences. The outcome was a questionnaire with a majority of identical questions that could be subject to uniform analysis across the programmes. Only 11 of 67 possible questions differed between programmes.

[8] It should be noted that there were other elements in the original outline, such as follow-up telephone interviews with students. Time and logistics dictated a simpler approach to the survey.

The method of administering the questionnaire was a major concern, particularly given the geographical spread of the students, the unreliability of postal services in parts of East and Southern Africa, and hence the difficulties of rapid communication. The OU team initially designed an approach that would have used recently developed technology in electronic surveying. This technology would have enabled students either to answer the questionnaire online, or to download and upload the questionnaire, and return it directly through the internet to a mailbox and to software that would have 'grabbed' the data and put it into a spreadsheet. This approach was innovative and exciting in conception. However, the technology was relatively new at the time and subject to problems. Moreover, it was realised that many students would probably not have access to the internet under conditions that would allow them to answer the questionnaire in the form proposed and that the instructions that would have had to be followed were relatively complex. Thus many students would also have needed a paper alternative.

After attempts to refine and finalise the internet questionnaire for students, it was decided to make questionnaires available to students both in the form of an email attachment and in a paper version sent by mail and for responses to go to each of the four partner institutions. The programme researchers would then input the students' responses into the internet questionnaire and send them to the electronic mailbox for the data to be inserted ('grabbed') straight into the spreadsheet, rather than having manual input.[9] Problems faced by those inputting the data into the internet format underlined the problems that we might have experienced if we had sent the internet questionnaire directly to students.[10] All programmes were requested to check the data in the internet questionnaires before submitting them, and to supply a copy of the original student responses so that data could be checked again if needed. Errors were searched for in later data cleaning and analysis.

The questionnaire was available for administration at the beginning of February 2002, together with an administrative file providing a common set of instructions for all partners, model letters to be used with students and line managers and a model for sending out reminders to students. The initial cut-off date for the survey period was end March 2002. This date was extended to end April because some programmes had had delays in sending out the questionnaires. Partners also needed sufficient time to input the data for analysis. In the event, we accepted data until the third week of May, after which SAPES Trust and OU colleagues carried out the data cleaning and an initial round of analysis, based on the numerical data common to all the programme questionnaires. A preliminary report for discussion by the team was produced on the basis of this initial analysis. After programme team discussion of the initial analysis, further analysis of the numerical data and of the open-ended data took place for this report, as well as analysis of the case study data.

Table 4.1 indicates the main characteristics of the samples for each programme. OU selected all students who had completed one course of out of three core courses in the programme. ZOU selected students who had completed one course in the programme but did not include students who had completed the Masters degree more than two years previously. SAPES Trust selected all those who had completed at least Part 1 of the Masters degree. UNISA selected all the students who had completed one course in their MBA programme.

[9] One partner, UNISA, had some problems with the internet questionnaires but was able to transfer most of the data rapidly into a spreadsheet.

[10] One particular problem was an error message that appeared on questionnaire submission, which led inputters to repeat the submission of some questionnaires. This was dealt with on data cleaning but was time-consuming for data inputters.

Table 4.1 Student sample size, method of delivery and response rates

	OU	SAPES	UNISA	ZOU
Sample size	770	169	250	129
Questionnaires sent by email	462	82	180	0
Invalid email addresses after mailing	62	22	n.d.	0
Questionnaires sent by post	770	109[11]	70	129
Returns by email	30	21	76	0
Returns by hand	0	3	0	0
Returns by post	195	12	24	23
Total number of returns	225	36	100	23
Response rate (rounded)	29%	21%	40%	18%
Total returns used in this analysis[12]	222	36	73	23

As stated above, we sent questionnaires and instructions to students to pass on to their line manager or someone who knew their work well. The response rate is recorded in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2 Questionnaires sent to students for line managers and response rates

	OU	SAPES	UNISA	ZOU
Total number of line manager questionnaires sent to students	770	169	250	129
Returned Line Manager questionnaires	41	7	26	7
Response rate (rounded)	5%	4%	10%	5%
Response rate as a percentage of student respondents (rounded)	18%	19%	26%	30%
Total returns used in this analysis	41	7	26	7

As well as personal data, the questionnaire for students had the following areas of inquiry:

- Students' study experience
- Data about the organization that students work for (or the one they were choosing to answer questions about)
- The impact of the students' learning on their organization and on development
- The impact of their learning on the students themselves

The line manager questionnaires mirrored the relevant sections of the student questionnaires to obtain corroboration of the student data and to explore differences in perceptions.

With respect to organization, we could not assume that all students were in work, or were currently working for a development organization or as managers in an organization. Students had the following choices:

- To select their current organization
- To select a past organization where they had been during their studies
- To state that they had no organization to select. In this case, they were directed to answer only certain sections of the questionnaire.

All programmes sent reminders to or phoned students to fill out and return the questionnaires. A summary of these activities is in Table 4.3.

[11] About 50% in Zimbabwe and 50% to other African countries.

[12] Some questionnaire returns were not included after data cleaning because they were invalid (i.e. not filled in correctly or had insufficient data to be included) or were duplicates (this occurred sometimes through in the processing of inputting on the internet); other questionnaires arrived too late to be included.

Table 4.3 Reminder activities

	OU	SAPES	UNISA	ZOU
Reminders sent to email students	One reminder sent	Two reminders sent, then weekly	Three reminders sent	Not applicable
Reminders sent to postal students	One reminder sent	One local reminder and one to regional students	Three reminders sent	Reminders mainly by direct contact
Reminders carried out by phone or other direct contact (e.g. tutorials)	None	Yes	Yes	Yes

In spite of the reminder process, it will be noted from Table 4.1 that the student response rate was overall quite low, highest in the case of UNISA and lowest in the case of ZOU. Comments from the programmes on the low response rate included:

- Length of the questionnaire (OU/SAPES Trust)
- Limited involvement of some students (OU - see below)
- Interruptions from public holidays and elections (UNISA/ZOU)
- Logistical difficulties of administering the questionnaire (ZOU)
- Students' organizational workloads and absences because of travel (OU/ZOU)

In spite of the low response rates, we did obtain a substantial student database of 354 respondents and a line manager database of 81 respondents. The data were cleaned and combined into two overall spreadsheets in which each institution was given a code. For the numerical analysis, priority was given to analysing questions common to all partner organisations.[13] The following types of analysis were then undertaken, the work being distributed among the partners. Researchers at SAPES Trust and OU extracted descriptive data on the student population, including characteristics of the students and the impact of their studies on them and their organizations, both as a whole and broken down by institutions. Researchers at UNISA extracted descriptive data from the line manager survey (taking the line managers as a whole rather than breaking them down by institutions). SAPES Trust and OU analysed the numerical data, including comparing student and line manager responses, while UNISA isolated and summarised the answers to open-ended questions on both surveys, to see to what extent they added to or qualified the numerical analysis. Finally, the OU team explored relationships (correlations and regressions) to examine to what extent the data answered our initial research questions and suggested areas for further analysis and reflection.

Much of the time the results from this analysis did not vary much between the four partner institutions. In other words, students on the four programmes had a lot in common and hence to a large extent the analysis of what factors tend to promote learning, application and capacity building could be undertaken on the combined population of students from all programmes who responded to the survey. However, some OU students differed from the rest sufficiently to warrant making adjustments to the analysis where needed. Unlike those on the other programmes, OU students in the UK, but not necessarily in other parts of the world, are likely to come from a wide range of professional backgrounds and could be taking courses in Development Management for different motives. The OU operates on a course choice system, which means that some students are only doing courses on a one-off basis, while others may have chosen a Development Management course because it can be accredited to another programme of study. In addition, some students may not be in development work, or in work at all; they may be studying to gain access to the development sector.

Thus 30 (or 13.5%) of the 222 OU respondents stated that they had no organization to refer to. OU respondents also constituted half of those who did not answer the question about

[13] Each institution had the possibility of analysing questions specific to its programme separately.

whether they had an organization to refer to or not. This is in contrast to the other programmes where students are all working in the professions that relate to the qualifications they are trying to attain. The OU may thus also have some people who are inappropriately self-registered on development management courses. The result is that there is a much wider spread of characteristics among the OU students than among the other programme respondents. Given the weight of OU students among the number of respondents overall, average as well as total percentages were calculated to mitigate the 'OU factor'. In addition, when carrying out statistical calculations such as correlations or regressions on work-related variables, the 30 OU students who stated they had no organization to refer to were filtered out.

4.2 THE CASE STUDIES

A major case study element was included in the research in order to go beyond quantification and statistical relationships to explore the question:

> *How* does the educational programme impact on organizational capacity building for development?

This does not imply that the programmes always succeed in promoting capacity building. The point was to focus on the mechanisms which have an impact (in those cases where there *is* an impact): in other words, the detail of how the educational programme works, how an individual learns, how they apply that learning and how organizational capacity may develop as a result.

Cases were chosen by repute, with each programme finding four to six organizations where one or more staff had studied all or part of the programme and there appeared to be some impact as a result, either from the student's own claim or in the opinion of a tutor or from clearly apparent changes in the organization. They included large and small organizations, organizations from different sectors, students in different positions and different types of organizational change - although lack of prior information and limitations on access put constraints on how much variety could be achieved.

The core of the method of investigation was a semi-structured interview with one or more students, based on a protocol which covered: background to the organization and change taking place; the student(s) and their performance; impact on the organization and development; mode of learning and capacity building. Unless they were unavailable, we also interviewed the student(s)' line manager(s) and/or at least one other colleague in the organization, and drew on documents such as organizational literature, course assignments, and reports. In some cases, there was a cross-check with responses to open-ended questions from the questionnaire(s). Where possible, a draft of the case study was written up and checked back with the student(s) concerned, who in several cases supplied additional information at this point. In a few cases, telephone interviews were carried out, for example when a line manager was not available on the same site as a student. In others, case study data were obtained electronically, particularly in checking a case study draft with a student and obtaining additional information.

Initially we planned for each case study to be researched by two people, one from the partner responsible with the relevant programme and one other. Two pilot cases were carried out for SAPES Trust and ZOU with an investigator from the OU. The feedback from these case studies supported the general approach and led to minor modifications in the protocol. The final list of case study investigations was primarily investigated by a researcher from the student's own programme institution[14], as having pairs of researchers across the programmes proved logistically complex (and expensive). The element of cross-checking was retained in

[14] More investigators were involved in the case of ZOU.

two ways: the researchers jointly discussed an early draft of a case study write-up, to identify gaps and problems in doing the case study; researchers from other programmes were able to comment on drafts of the case study analyses before the case study investigator returned them to students for feedback and final drafting.

We also wanted to test the validity of the framework we had developed (Figure 3.1). Adopting the approach of 'contrastive inference', we used the case studies to check which of two competing theories was best borne out by the evidence. At the same time as seeking evidence of *action learning* (as encapsulated in Figure 3.1), we also challenged this approach by looking for evidence of direct *transfer of knowledge*.

Action Learning - This interactive approach suggests that both individual learning and organizational capacity building occur through learning cycles; that these intersect in "learning interactions"; hence we would expect organizational capacity building to occur alongside individual learning and to depend on the quality of these "learning interactions".

Transfer of knowledge - In this linear approach, individuals absorb knowledge from the educational programme and then apply it; organizational capacity building would depend on the ability of the individuals and the relevance of the curriculum.

In effect the protocol underlying how we investigated impact on capacity building was based on a linear framework: we asked about the effects of study on student performance and then for ways in which students applied what they had learnt to bring about change in their organizations. However, we also asked for specific examples of 'learning interactions' as well as for examples of direct application of learning, and to what extent learning and its application were experienced as linear or interactive. We expected to find some evidence of both. The question in the end is whether the action learning approach explains the totality of evidence better than the alternative.

In the end 18 case studies were investigated, six from UNISA and four each from the other three programmes. In each case a Case Study Report was completed. The investigations took place between August 2001 and August 2002, when drafts were presented to a team meeting in Harare and also sent to the individual students for their comments and additional information. In all 18 the reputed positive impact was confirmed. Thus the cases were not a cross-section of all students' organizations but a selection where positive impact occurred. This allowed us to explore the question of *how* the educational programme impacts on organizational capacity building, looking for effects of study on student performance, types of impact on the student and on organizational capacity building, reasons for impact, mechanisms and factors which might constrain or assist capacity building, as well as how learning and its application were experienced. In particular we explored factors in the study experience, such as the opportunities and constraints arising from a student's position in his or her organization, and of course curriculum and design features of the programmes themselves.

The case studies chosen differed in several respects:

- 6 related to the UNISA MBA programme and 4 each to the other three programmes (OU GDM, ZOU/MDASA, SAPES Trust MPS). The cases varied not only in which programme the students concerned were on, but also in when they started, whether they had completed the programme concerned and if not how far they had got.
- They were from different countries: 10 from Zimbabwe and two each from South Africa, Lesotho, Uganda and UK. Hence there were very different socio-economic and political contexts.
- They were of organizations which differed in many ways: public, private or NGO; large or small; local or international; specific aims, area of work, etc.
- The students involved were in very different positions in their organization. Cases included students who were directors of small organizations, heads of departments or

other units, managers in large bureaucracies, and in a number of other positions. In some cases there were several students in different positions in the same organization.

- The degree and kind of support that the organization gave for study, and opportunities for applying learning, both varied enormously.

Table 4.4 below gives basic data on the 18 cases corresponding to all but the last of the above dimensions of variety. In what follows the case study organizations are identified only by programme and number, and the students within them are referred to anonymously by initials, as in the table.

4.3 COMBINED ANALYSIS AND REPORTING

A draft report was prepared and presented to dissemination workshops held at UNISA in Midrand, South Africa and at SAPES Trust in Harare, Zimbabwe, both in November 2002. Both were well attended, the first mainly with staff, students and case study subjects and the second with a broader range of participants also including representatives of other educational institutions, ministries, NGOs and donors. The draft report had separate sections for the different types of analysis: descriptive statistics on the student population; qualitative data from open-ended survey questions; and exploration of relationships through correlations and regressions; followed by a section analysing the case studies. There were appendices with tables of descriptive data, the results of correlations and regressions, and all 18 Case Study Reports in full.

This report combines the different types of analysis. As outlined in the Introduction and in subsequent sections, the analysis focuses on the interactive elements of our framework:

- Students and programmes of study, and their application of learning and performance at work (A and B in Figure 3.1)
- Organizational capacity-building and change (C in Figure 3.1).

The first of these is reported in Section 5. Programmes of study have been subject to numerous evaluations in the Open University and other institutions, being the arena in which educational effectiveness is traditionally assessed. Our survey and case studies reveal how students perceive the learning process and how they felt they had benefited from it (or otherwise), on the one hand, and also show whether and how students were able to apply their learning at work, on the other. The case studies identify particular kinds of learning interaction and application arising from study, while both survey and case studies underline the professional concerns and motivation of the kind of students working in DPAM.

The relationship between individual and organizational learning and change is the least researched area (and the one most difficult to research) and thus adds most to our understanding of how and under what conditions educational programmes in DPAM may or may not bring wider changes in individuals and organizations. This is the subject of Section 6. Here again we bring together all types of survey analysis with data from the case studies, and we include a number of ‘cameos’ of some of the case studies. We hope that this section also illuminates our conceptualization of educational effectiveness and how programmes in DPAM may best contribute to capacity-building.

Table 4.4 Basic characteristics of the 18 case studies

Case Study	Sector	Staff	No of students	Country	Sector, scope	Student(s') position(s)
Case studies where students were studying on the Managing Development Agencies in Southern Africa programme (MDASA) (MSc in Development Management)						
MDASA[15] CS1	Media	5	1	Zimbabwe	NGO	Director
MDASA CS2	Development	6	1+	Zimbabwe	NGO, I	Junior manager
MDASA CS3	Training	1	1	Zimbabwe	NGO	Sole worker
MDASA CS4	Micro-finance	21	1	Zimbabwe	NGO	Director
Case studies where students were studying the Masters in Policy Studies with Southern African Political Economy Series (SAPES) Trust						
SAPES[16] CS1	Social development	~25	3	Zimbabwe	Public	Head of unit=
SAPES CS2	Governance	~5	1	Zimbabwe	NGO	Director
SAPES CS3	Local government information	~10	1	Zimbabwe	Public*, I	Co-ordinator
SAPES CS4	Development information	~5	2	Zimbabwe	NGO, I	Regional Director
Case studies where students were studying the Masters in Business Administration (MBA) with the University of South Africa School of Business Leadership (UNISA)						
UNISA[17] CS1	Energy	~500	~20	S Africa	Public>	Various
UNISA CS2	Finance	~30	1	Zimbabwe	Private	Head of unit
UNISA CS3	Children's welfare	~50	1	Zimbabwe	NGO, I	Deputy Director
UNISA CS4	Motor vehicles	~50	1	S Africa	Private, I	Head of unit
UNISA CS5	Re-training	~10	1	Lesotho	NGO, I	Regional manager
UNISA CS6	Footwear	~200	1	Lesotho	Private	Senior manager
Case studies where students were studying with the Global Programme in Development Management (GDM) at the Open University (MSc in Development Management)						
OU CS1	Rural capacity	~20	1	Uganda	NGO	Head of unit
OU CS2	Children	30	1	Uganda	NGO	Director
OU CS3	Development	180	5+	UK	NGO, I	Various
OU CS4	Development and training consultancy	175	30+	UK	Public>, I	Various

Notes
Many of the figures for staff numbers are estimates.
= - This particular student was Head of a department in a government ministry. Others are heads of other kinds of units (Chief accountant for a private firm, head of fundraising in an NGO, etc.).
* - Inter-governmental - Southern African Development Community information centre on local government
> - State agency undergoing some privatisation
I = International

[15] For ZOU, we refer to the case studies by the programme name, MDASA.
[16] For SAPES Trust, we have abbreviated the case study references, where used, to SAPES for ease of communication.
[17] For UNISA, we have abbreviated the case study references, where used, to UNISA.

5 Students, programmes and applying learning at work

This section is about the top half of our framework - elements A and B, which relate to the interaction between students and programmes, and students' learning and their performance at work. Element A is the conventional arena of educational evaluation. Changes in performance at work as a result of learning from programmes of study - element B - are less frequently part of evaluations carried out by educational institutions. This study suggests that the extent to which students perceive their interaction with the educational programme as a positive experience will influence to some extent whether they attempt to apply their learning in their organizations. However, changes in performance at work will also depend on other factors, such as opportunities to apply learning in the work place and a positive organizational environment. We first provide some background about the respondent students, their organizations and the programmes of study, before looking at how students perceived the programmes and their own learning process. We then examine data about whether and how students have been able to apply their learning at work, as well as whether they think it has improved their performance.

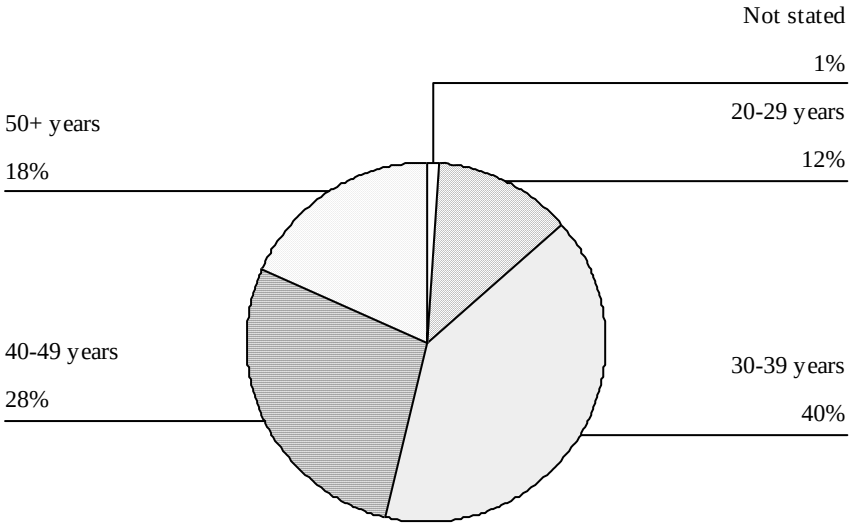
Some of the data referred to in this section and Section 6 are given in further detail in the Appendix to this report. Where referred to in the text, the tables in the Appendix are prefixed with 'A'. Correlations and regressions were also carried out to establish relationships between key variables. Only some of the results are included, and we have presented them in summary form, either in the main text or in footnotes.[18] We have also included scores for percentages of all students ('total' percentages) and for averages of the percentage scores in each programme ('average percentages') in some of the tables in the text.[19] This is to mitigate the 'OU factor', as outlined in Section 4. Finally, some of the case studies referred to in this section are reported more fully in Section 6, when we look at organizations.

5.1 CHARACTERISTICS OF STUDENTS AND LINE MANAGERS

The students on these programmes had considerable life and work experience to draw on as 'reflective practitioners'. First of all, they were all mature students, as can be seen from Figure 5.1 Second, most respondents in work were middle or senior managers. There was an overall small majority of female respondents, although this was influenced by the weight of the OU students in the population as whole. UNISA by contrast had a majority of male student respondents, probably reflecting the gendered nature of manager employment in the private sector (Table A2).

[18] Details on the calculations and results are presented in Ayele et al, 2002.
[19] Total and average percentages are given in all the detailed data as student responses in the Appendix.

Figure 5.1 Student respondents by age group

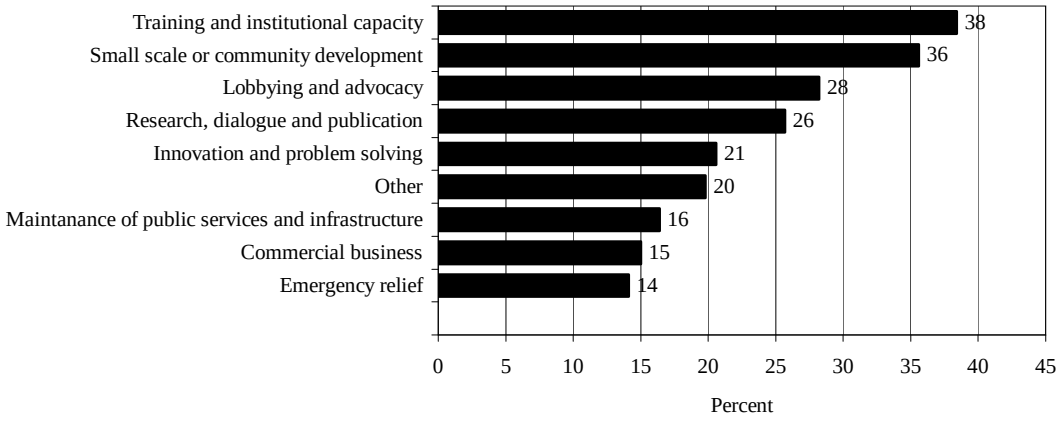


In terms of their organizations, nearly one third of the student respondents worked for NGOs, followed by the private sector (predominantly, but not solely, UNISA students), state employees, and employees of parastatals or inter-governmental organizations and donor agencies (see Table 5.1). Over 50% of students' organizations were medium-sized to large organizations with more than 100 employees. The main areas of work included training, community development, lobbying and advocacy, and research. There was also a wide spread of other kinds of activities (see Figure 5.2).

Table 5.1 Type of organizations in which student respondents worked (percent)

Type of organization	**OU**	**SAPES**	**UNISA**	**ZOU**	**Total of all students**	**Average of programme scores**
Private firm	10	6	55	0	18	18
Community based organisation	4	0	1	4	3	2
Non-governmental organisation	33	31	7	65	29	34
State organisation	13	42	14	9	16	20
Parastatal	4	6	14	4	6	7
Donor agency	5	6	1	9	4	5
Inter-governmental organisation	1	8	5	0	3	4
Self-employed or private consultant	5	3	0	4	4	3
Other	9	0	1	4	6	4
Not Stated	15	0	1	0	10	4
Total	100	100	100	100	100	
Total number	222	36	73	23	354	

Figure 5.2 Type of work done by students' organisations (not including 10% of respondents who were not in relevant work)



Almost half of those who responded to the line manager's questionnaire were currently line managers to the students; others characterised themselves as bosses or colleagues (see Table A31). The majority of line manager respondents had had considerable experience of their own jobs and had worked with the students for a sufficient time to observe the students' work and any changes that might have resulted from students' learning. About a third of those who answered the line manager questionnaire had worked with the students for more than five years. The largest proportion (41%) had worked with them for 2-5 years, while another 25% had only worked with the students for less than two years (see Table A32).

5.2 CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PROGRAMMES

As we outlined earlier, all the programmes are part-time and directed to people in work, primarily mature managers and other professionals in policy or decision-making positions. They all aimed to increase the competence of the participants in managing, policy analysis and decision-making, and hence to build capacity in their organizations and in DPAM generally, in addition to promoting individuals' academic learning and assisting them to obtain qualifications.

The programmes were all at postgraduate level. They were open to participants working in all sectors of organizational life (state, private and NGO), although they differed in their main target groups (see below). They were all modular, and students could take single modules (OU, ZOU, UNISA) or Part One without Part Two (SAPES Trust) if they wished to develop specific competencies without completing a whole masters.

All four programmes combined theory with practical skills. All used the participants' own experience as well as case studies as sources of empirical materials for analysis and reflection. They all sought to develop participants' problem-solving, critical and evaluative skills by presenting conceptual frameworks and contextual information for them to apply to practical situations. They all concluded with a dissertation or project module (optional in the case of UNISA) in which students undertook a large, practically-oriented piece of work relating to a research topic or organizational problem which concerned them.

There were also differences between the programmes. One (SAPES Trust MPS) was a block-release programme and the other three were distance learning programmes on the Open University's 'supported open learning' model. The three distance learning programmes were mainly text-based, but the OU GDM programme included a version with online tutoring.

The subject focus differed, within the general area of development policy and management (DPAM). The OU GDM programme and the ZOU MDASA programme were both specifically in development management (they were essentially drawn from the same OU programme but with some minor presentational differences; in addition, the range of optional courses open to ZOU students was more limited than for OU students). The UNISA MBA, as its name implies, was a management programme, but taught in the context of a developing country and region (South Africa and southern Africa more generally). The SAPES Trust MPS was a programme in policy studies, again in the context of the developing region of southern Africa, although the programme has students from further afield in the continent. Thus the modules also differed, although the ZOU modules were a subset of those offered by the OU, and some subject modules were in common between UNISA, OU and ZOU.

Although the programmes were open to all, the main target audiences differed. Thus the SAPES Trust MPS was aimed mainly at policy-makers in the state sector, although there were also a large number of NGO participants and some from the private sector. The UNISA programme was aimed at managers irrespective of sector, but not surprisingly attracted students largely from the private sector, with a large minority from both state agencies and NGOs. The OU and ZOU programmes were aimed at staff of development organizations, divided mainly between state agencies and NGOs, although in practice there were fewer participants from state organizations, and the ZOU programme in particular attracted mostly NGO staff. The OU GDM programme also has students working in banks, social relief organizations, educational institutions and private enterprise, as well as a small number of self-employed, indicating the wide range of professions of participants. A sizeable minority was studying out of interest in the subject, in the hope of changing careers, or taking one-off development management courses as part of another Masters qualification.

There follows a brief description of each programme.

5.2.1 SAPES Trust, Master of Policy Studies

The SAPES Trust Master of Policy Studies is a block release programme that seeks to optimize the development of high-level leadership and capacity for policy making for sustainable development in Eastern and Southern Africa. The programme is committed to the development of an innovative leadership and seeks to modify existing systems of learning in policy formulation based on a multidisciplinary approach. It facilitates training in policy formulation, analysis and evaluation for the Eastern and Southern African region with particular regard to issues of regional integration, the interface of national and regional policies with global tendencies, and sustainable development. It complements and adds to existing training resources and approaches by pooling regional expertise in policy studies.

Trainees at MPS, who are required to have a good first degree, attend intensive lecture periods spread out over a two-year period. An average of 60% of the participants are from government institutions including ministries of finance, cabinet offices, planning agencies, local government, environment, agriculture, industry and commerce. The rest of the participants are from financial institutions and non-governmental agencies with an advocacy role in fields such as environment, human rights, social welfare, health and communication. Most participants have at least five years of policy relevant work experience. The bulk of the participants have expertise in economic policy aspects, while others have skills in human resource development, social policy, environmental, political science and international relations.

The programme provides an opportunity for participants to exchange experiences and dialogue on ways to improve policies and the policy-making process. Core courses include: Governance and Policy Making; Economic Analysis and Development; Regional Cooperation and Integration; Gender Issues in Policy Making and Research Methods. Elective courses include: Environmental Policy; Social Policy; International Relations and Sectoral Economic

Analysis. Participants are required to undertake both course work, including assignments and examination, and dissertation to complete the programme. The teaching faculty is drawn from the SAPES Trust regional network of researchers/lecturers based in various universities and research institutions throughout the SADC region specialising in different fields. The programme is accredited by three universities: the National University of Lesotho (NUL), University of Fort Hare (UFH) and University of Zimbabwe (UZ).

5.2.2 University of South Africa (UNISA) School of Business Leadership, MBA Programme

This programme is taught through distance learning and was started in June 1997 with 50 students following an agreement between the Open University Business School (OUBS) and the UNISA School for Business Leadership (SBL). In the initial stages, the first two years of study were to be for a UNISA award and the students would then proceed to obtain an OUBS qualification on completion of the MBA. With a change in the laws governing the operation of foreign academic institutions in South Africa, students now receive an MBA from UNISA in collaboration with the OUBS.

In contrast to the UNISA's Masters in Business Leadership, which requires students to have a degree on entry, excluding a substantial portion of prospective students who have gained senior management positions, the students on the MBA do not have to have formal qualifications to enter. The programme comprises different stages that have to be completed before the student can qualify with an MBA (after approximately four years of study). The programme thus provides opportunities for people who would otherwise not have been able to study.

The programme is successfully drawing students from private enterprise, government departments and from the ranks of small business owners. Students have to work together in order to achieve good results: much of the learning takes place in small group discussions and at residential schools where people have to share work and career related experiences. For many of the students this is the first opportunity they have to relate, on an equal level, with people across racial and other social barriers.

The results thus far have been exceptional. There were approximately 1,500 students on the programme at the time of this research, although not all of them were active. Students can take breaks between the various stages of the programme to continue working on their careers or to focus on their families. Most of the students on the programme have been able to make impressive gains in their careers. However this progress can also result in increased workloads and temporary withdrawal from study.

Even though all students have to relate to people of different backgrounds in the workplace, the MBA Programme requires of them to do this in an environment where they are seen and being treated as equals. It is an opportunity for people to hear how others are experiencing the workplace, how management decisions affect individuals and how those who are at the receiving end of management instructions perceive the workplace. Even though this would be a positive learning experience in any environment, it is especially so in the South African context where people have been segregated and have not had the opportunity to share experiences and insights as equals in a safe environment.

5.2.3 Zimbabwe Open University (ZOU), Managing Development Agencies in Southern Africa (MDASA), MSc in Development Management, in partnership with the OU UK

The MDASA programme became operational in Zimbabwe in 1996, initially in a partnership between Organizational Training and Development Limited and the Open University UK

(OU), and from May 1999-April 2003 in a partnership between the OU and ZOU.[20] The programme was directed towards capacity building of development managers in Southern Africa. It was particularly designed to meet the needs of middle-ranking and senior staff in development organizations, as well as those aspiring to such positions. Participants in the programme enhanced their capacities in development management by applying ideas, frameworks and skills to their own practical situations via a critical 'reflective practitioner' learning methodology. The programme content was based on course modules from the OU GDM programme (see below), and the OU also awarded the qualifications of Postgraduate Diploma and MSc. Some courses were taught by tutors based in the UK while others had in-country tuition and local printing of materials.

The programme aimed to:
- Increase educational attainment
- Assist capacity-building for the students' organizations, in terms of improved capacities for development management via their staff trained on the scheme
- Assist capacity-building for ZOU and the region, in terms of ability to present a postgraduate programme in this vital subject area on a sustainable basis

Although having a first degree was not a requirement, students were better placed for study on the programme if they had a prior background of study in higher education. The programme combined courses in development management, development studies and environmental issues together with general management courses. Most of the courses were complemented by day schools and occasional residential schools. All of the courses lasted six months and required about 12 hours study per week. The courses were practical as well as academic, relating management and development concepts to work situations. Most of the modules required the student to complete three or four written assignments, some of which were reports and essays relating ideas from the course to practical situations. Most modules had end of course examinations, although two required students to do a project based on work experience.

5.2.4 The Open University (OU) , Global Programme in Development Management

The Global Programme in Development Management (GDM) is a part-time programme of supported open learning that leads to the following qualifications:
- Postgraduate Diploma in Development Management
- MSc in Development Management

A Certificate in Development Management is also available. The programme is modular, and its courses can be taken as stand-alone modules for professional updating as well as for these awards. Some courses are also options in other postgraduate awards in the university. The programme is available in Europe, and to students in other most parts of the world through a special scheme.

The programme is designed to meet the needs of development professionals and those aspiring to work in development by:
- providing conceptual tools for understanding and interpreting the rapidly changing arenas of public action
- teaching key skills in the strategic management of change, especially in institutional development, and project management and evaluation.

It is directed to those working or intending to work in government, multilateral, bilateral and non-governmental organizations, as well as the private sector. Its starting point is that many people want to consolidate or upgrade their analytical and practical skills. The programme is therefore used for individual staff development.

[20] At the time of this report, the programme had come to an end.

The courses have been designed and written with the inputs of experts and practitioners in the development and management fields. This interactive production process means that the courses aim to address current issues in development management, and there is a strong emphasis on case studies and practical work. The issues, frameworks and skills are widely applicable to many situations globally and there are students from the public and private sector in the UK studying in this programme as well as in other parts of the world.

There are three compulsory courses to gain the MSc in Development Management. Elective courses in the programme include a foundation course in development studies and strands in management, environment and social policy. Students have to pass three elective courses as well as the compulsory courses to gain a Masters degree.

Although students are strongly recommended to have a first degree, work experience is also highly desirable, so it is possible to enter the GDM programme without the qualification of a degree. There are thus students from different backgrounds and aspirations studying on the programme. The use of the 'reflective practitioner' approach encourages students to draw on their life and work experience in different ways.

The Open University believes strongly that distance learning needs to be accompanied by an effective support infrastructure to help students achieve success. The support of a tutor is key both in feedback on assignments and in day schools and residential schools. Many courses now have the possibility of electronic tuition.

5.3 STUDENTS' RESPONSES TO THE PROGRAMMES

The programme descriptions above promise a considerable amount to students in terms of possibilities for their professional and personal development. Apart from the desire or need to attain postgraduate qualifications, what in practice motivated students to choose these programmes? As indicated above, three of the programmes did not require students to have a first degree, however more than two-thirds of respondents had a degree or even higher. However over half the UNISA and ZOU and 13% of OU respondents recorded that they did not have a university degree, thus bearing out to some extent the open entry policy (with caveats) of these institutions (see Table A10 for more details). The majority of students were taking the programmes for professional and personal development, while a much lower percentage wanted to improve career prospects in their current organizations (although a higher percentage of the UNISA MBA students had this aspiration) (Table 5.2). Some students were also studying because they wanted to change their careers (the percentage for OU students was the highest here, reflecting that proportion of students who were aspiring to, rather than actually working in, development).

Table 5.2 Motivation of respondents for embarking on study (percent)

Type of motivation	OU	SAPES	UNISA	ZOU	Total of all students	Average of programme scores
Personal development	80	72	84	61	79	74
Professional development	73	75	84	87	76	80
Improve career prospects in current occupation	36	44	62	43	43	46
Change careers	33	14	29	17	29	23
Achieve more complete education	32	39	42	17	34	33
Required by employer	0	19	11	0	5	8
Other reason	8	3	8	9	8	7

These data are supported by the extent to which students chose their own programmes for study (as opposed to their institutions choosing for them): for a large majority of the respondents, the choice was a personal one, although a greater proportion of students studying with UNISA and ZOU had the involvement of their organization or funder, not only in their programme choice but in the choice of institution with which they were to study. One might therefore anticipate that, for UNISA and ZOU students, the organizations they worked for were involved in other ways to make sure that maximum benefit was derived from having staff on the programmes. Of all the respondents, UNISA and ZOU students had the highest percentage of fees paid by their organizations, and they were also most likely to receive time off for examination revision (see Table 5.3). It will be noted from this table that OU students received the least all round 'sponsorship' (column 1); different forms of support were more likely to be forthcoming in the southern African organizations perhaps because they had a greater vested interest in the outcomes. In addition SAPES Trust students could not have studied without their employers releasing them for the intensive lecture periods.

However, in general students did not report very high levels of organizational support for their studies, although their line managers' views on this matter tended to be more positive in most areas (see column 7). This could be a difference between 'over' and 'under'-views of the situation (Tabor, forthcoming), or because line managers tend to re-affirm the decision to support the student. However, it could be simply that line managers are stating an official policy of support for staff undertaking study, which is not borne out by the experience of students themselves.

Table 5.3 Support provided by organizations to student respondents (percentage responding positively to each option)

Type of support	**OU**	**SAPES**	**UNISA**	**ZOU**	**Total of all students**	**Average of programme scores**	**LM**[21]
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
Staff cover while studying	4	36	33	13	14	22	30
Regular time off to study	10	58	18	39	18	31	51
Time off for exam revision	28	56	66	74	42	56	70
Payment for tuition[22]	32	11	63	48	38	39	
Mentoring	4	8	15	13	7	10	27
Opportunities to put learning into practice	25	64	41	65	35	49	82
General encouragement	36	50	44	43	40	43	84
Other support	10	14	7	9	10	10	30

The quality of the courses and teaching is particularly important when students are expected to be reflective practitioners. Engagement with students in the mode proposed by Baker et al (Section 3) requires considerable effort to make materials interactive and to motivate students to reflect on and test their learning in practice. In all cases, assignments, projects and dissertations provide key mechanisms for ensuring interactive learning as well as for assessment. Apart from this, the main source of 'learning interactions', for the three distance learning programmes, which are mainly text-based, was the interaction between printed (or audio or video) learning materials and the individual students' experience. By contrast, the main source of 'learning interactions' for the SAPES Trust students was face-to-face group interactions.

[21] Line managers
[22] Question not asked to line managers.

The advent of electronic tuition can also enable and reinforce the reflective practitioner process by requiring students to undertake particular tasks and contribute to discussions from their experience as well as from their course understandings. In the programmes under study, only a limited number of OU students had access to electronic tuition, and we have not taken it into account in the survey.

The majority of students expressed a positive personal learning experience, particularly in the areas of enjoyment, quality and expectations, as well as more specific aspects such as printed learning materials and tutor feedback on assignments. Different types of satisfaction with the programmes are summarised in Table 5.4 (more detailed data are available in the Appendix, Tables A15a-j).

Table 5.4 Student satisfaction with programmes of study (percent)

Type of satisfaction with programme	**Total scores of all students for 'quite a lot of' or 'very much' satisfaction**	**Average of programme scores for 'quite a lot of' or 'very much' satisfaction**
General aspects:		
Enjoyment of courses	90	92
Quality of content	90	89
Quality of teaching/learning support	66	71
Amount of teaching/learning support	58	57
Relevance of content to work	69	78
Course/programme met expectations	87	89
Selected specific aspects:	**'Fairly' and 'very satisfied' (total)**	**'Fairly' and 'very satisfied' (average)**
Printed learning materials	96	94
Tutor feedback on assignments	90	88
Relevance to country	73	81
Reflective practitioner approach or relevance to own work situation[23]	73	80

One feature to pick up on is the difference in total and average scores in 'relevance of content to work', 'relevance to country' and 'reflective practioner approach' (or relevance to own work situation) (see Tables A15e, i and j for details). These result partly reflect the 'OU factor' outlined in Section 4, i.e. that not all OU students were in work or in development work at the time of study, or may have chosen to study a course in the GDM programme within the context of another qualification. They also reflect a lower response rate to the second and third of these variables (see Appendix).

Another feature to pick out is the lower satisfaction overall with the amount and quality of teaching/learning support. This might reflect the types of programme investigated (namely distance learning and block release[24]) as there was little variation between the institutions (see Tables A15c and d). There are some weak, positive correlations between the quality of teaching/learning support and feedback on assignments and the overall outcomes of the study experience in terms of how students thought it had helped them (Table 5.5 below) and how they had changed (Table 5.7 in the next section).[25] The amount of teaching and satisfaction with printed learning materials (very highly scored) seemed to have no relationship with the

[23] The terms used were slightly different here, depending on the programme.

[24] Although it would have been interesting to have had comparative data for conventional, face to face courses in DPAM here.

[25] Quality of teaching/learning support with (i) how programmes has helped students = .119, significant at 5% level and (ii) how students have changed as result of programme = .109, significant at the 5% level; feedback on assignments and (i) and (ii) were .109 and .113 respectively, significant at the 5% level.

outcomes of the study experience. Correlations between study outcomes and variables such as relevance of content to work or to one's country were more strongly positive than the teaching dimensions, as one might anticipate, although the reflective practitioner approach/relevance to work situation did not seem to have an association in itself (even though students responded positively to this dimension of their studies).[26] This is not to suggest that the quality and quantity of teaching is an unimportant dimension to students' interaction with programmes of study, but it does suggest that other factors may be as or more important in influencing effective outcomes. In fact, correlating summed scores for the range of areas of satisfaction and learning outcomes overall shows stronger relationships than for specific variables, which suggests that multiple factors are involved in an overall positive study experience and need to be taken into account by educationalists.

Box 5.1 Selected open-ended comments from students about their study experiences

Some positive comments

'The materials were clear - concise and structured in a manner that made distance learning simply and easy to follow.'
'The provision of materials made studying in Ethiopia where access is limited much easier.'
'Tutors were always available when I needed to talk to them. The comments…on assignments enabled me to identify my weaknesses and subsequently made improvements.'
'The tutor enabled me to apply course concepts to my work situation.'
'The research project introduced me to seeking knowledge on my own rather than learning from what other people say and think.'
'The practical approach and case studies are applicable to my work.'
'The programme is very relevant to work setting and my job.'
'My country is a developing country, so the examples in the course were very close to what I see around.'
'Issues discussed were practical and relevant to the region.'
'Highly relevant in South Africa with changes and emerging market. Reflective approach very relevant because in this fast-moving environment, one seldom takes the time to reflect. The course assignments etc. make you reflect and question relevance to the work place.'
'Reflective practitioner approach bridges gaps left by theoretical only approach.'
'I found the residential school…especially useful to demonstrate the effectiveness of the modelling techniques and negotiation.'

Some negative comments

'Some of the discussions in the books does [sic] not relate truly to South African situations.'
'Lecture notes were not satisfactory for most of the subjects.'
'The curriculum was too compressed such that students are overworked.'
'Teaching texts should be simplified so that those who use English as a second language can benefit more.'
'Despite the quality of the teaching material, further support is essential to reassure the student that they are interpreting the information correctly.'
'The work was very heavy, much more than the 10 hours per week recommended.'
'I spend all day working at a computer screen…The last thing I want in my study time is to spend more time conferencing on a computer.'

Box 5.1 exhibits a selected range of open-ended comments on the programmes including some of the negative ones. However, in examining the extent to which students thought that the programmes had been of benefit we found some remarkably high scores.[27] Although all

[26] Relevance of content to work with (i) how programmes has helped students = .398, significant at 1% level and (ii) how students have changed as result of programme = .253, significant at the 1% level; relevance to country and (i) and (ii) were .179 and .241 respectively, significant at the 1% level.
[27] There was also much more positive open-ended feedback than there was negative, although the negative feedback is also instructive for the individual programmes.

educational programmes can, and should, always improve their pedagogic performance, the potential role of such programmes as these in supporting the creation of change agents and leaders thus needs serious reflection by donors and policy-makers in the education and training field. The quantitative data are summarised in Table 5.5. More detailed data are given in Tables A28a-28K. From Table 5.5, most respondents thought that the programmes had provided them with mental stimulation, informed them about ideas, practices and new conceptual frameworks, and promoted personal growth. A high percentage also thought that the programmes had encouraged an attitude of self-development, had challenged their assumptions, helped them to know when to apply practices, to identify strengths in themselves, and had assisted their overall professional development. Two thirds thought that the programmes had helped 'remedy weaknesses'. For work-based questions, the OU respondents had the lowest positive scores, for the reasons already outlined in Section 4 (see tables in Appendix for details). However, for variables such as the level of mental stimulation or conceptual development, OU respondents rated their changes as highly as the other institutions.

Table 5.5 How studying on the programme has helped students (percent)

Area of benefit	Total scores of all students for 'quite a lot' and 'a lot' of benefit	Average of programme scores for 'quite a lot' and 'a lot' of benefit
Provided mental stimulation	96	96
Helped me obtain a higher salary	14	20
Promoted personal growth	90	92
Assisted my professional development	71	82
Informed me about ideas and practices	96	97
Helped me to know when to apply practices	75	85
Gave me new conceptual frameworks	92	94
Challenged my assumptions	78	83
Helped me remedy weaknesses	64	73
Helped me identify strengths in myself	71	84
Encouraged an attitude of self-development	87	92

The one area in which very few students thought they had benefited as a result of their studies was in obtaining a higher salary (Table 5.5). In the open-ended part of the questionnaire quite a number of students commented on career moves that they had been able to make or pointed out that they could cope with new challenges as a result of their studies. However, the lack of salary benefit may be a reflection of a number of factors. One is that a total of only 16% of respondents had completed their studies at the time of the survey (and therefore would not have received their full qualifications; see Table A11). Lack of increase in salaries may also reflect the career structures of the areas in which students work: it may be less easy to gain promotion and earn higher salaries in state sectors and NGOs. UNISA MBA students had the highest percentage of promotions experienced by respondents in their current organizations (33%), while OU and SAPES Trust students had the highest percentages that had moved to new jobs in other organizations (23 and 25 percent respectively; see Table A29a). Although the data may also reflect the social and economic conditions of employment in Southern Africa at the time of the survey (March-May, 2002), educationalists may need to think about whether their applied programmes are doing enough to support students at the professional

level, while organizations that employ students may need to think how enhanced professional skills are rewarded in the workplace.

5.4 LEARNING STYLES AND APPROACHES TO WORK

> 'The day school and some of the tutorials were a bit disappointing as fellow students were not always as well-prepared as they should have been.'

Learning and the use of learning is not simply a function of the interaction of students with programmes - it also relates to the personal characteristics of students. Relevant characteristics include motivation and learning style, while constraints on an individual, such as their position in an organization and the extent and form of employer support, may also influence both how well participants learn and how they are able to apply their learning at work.

In this instance, we expect the student body to be highly committed for a number of reasons: enrolment in part-time study requires high motivation; and a large proportion of the students are working in values-based professions which are often not as well-paid as the private sector and involve long hours and frequent absences from home. The combination of professional commitment, concern for development and existing professional experience makes for a positive base on which to enhance knowledge and skills. It may also result in a particular type of learner.

As indicated in Section 3, our study borrowed to some extent from Entwistle's categorization of learners (Entwistle, 1994): deep (reflective or looking for meaning), strategic (adopting a goal-oriented approach to the learning process) and surface (having an instrumental approach and a limited engagement with the learning process). We used a number of simple statements to check students' own learning behaviours, and also asked students to categorise themselves as a single type of learner by using the following statements:

- *Deep*: I am a contemplative learner; I often follow my own trains of thought. I am usually very interested in what I learn and my natural inclination is to achieve a thorough understanding. Studying makes me see things differently.
- *Strategic*: I am an efficient learner; I work out what I need to know and how best to learn it. I balance going deeply into the content with prioritizing what I think is important or useful to achieve the best assignment/exam grades I can.
- *Surface*: I'm interested in what I learn but I don't usually get too involved or excited about it. I tend to treat study tasks separately, as a series of task demands, and do what's needed to meet the assignment. For me, study is more of a means to an end.

As might be expected from the kinds of student taking programmes in development policy and management, the majority of students (62% of 353 responses) categorised themselves as deep learners, with 26% strategic and 12% surface. Within programmes there was a little variation, with OU and UNISA students in particular categorising themselves more frequently as surface learners. Analysis of the more complex, disaggregated variables for types of learning also shows that students adopt a range of practices (see Ayele et al, 2002). They are not simply doing one thing or the other.

One might expect approaches to study and approaches to work to have some correlation with each other. From our study, there is indeed a significant if not strong relationship between deep and strategic approaches to study and 'positive' approaches to work.[28] Does this then

[28] The phrases used were: 'I have quite a lot of influence on those around me at work; I am usually very involved in my work; I usually accomplish what I set out to accomplish; I keep myself informed of what the organization is doing; I am able to make decisions about how to do my work.' The correlation between deep approaches to study and positive approaches to work was .296, significant at the 1%

suggest that deep and strategic learners apply their learning more at work than other types of learner? Table 5.6 shows those who said they applied their learning quite a lot or a great deal by learner type. Although there is a considerable difference in numbers between the categories of learner, and a tendency that might be expected for deep learners to apply their learning more than others, there is maybe not as great a variation in extent of application as one might expect. Again, this might be a function of such variables as type of work and motivation to study on the part of the majority of students.

Table 5.6 How much different types of learner claim to apply learning at work (percentages of 316 responses)

Type of learner	Students who say they apply their learning quite a lot or a great deal
Deep	75 (144/192)
Strategic	70 (59/84)
Surface	58 (23/40)

5.5 LEARNING AND PERFORMANCE AT WORK

How did students change in their work as a result of their studies, and to what extent did they improve their own performance? We look first at the story from the survey and then consider the dimensions that the case studies add to this story.

5.5.1 The survey story

As we saw above, content and work-based relevance were associated with positive learning outcomes for students. Further analysis showed that not only did the majority of respondents think they learnt ideas useful for work practice from these programmes, but, as one might expect, this perception of usefulness was positively and significantly correlated with applying their learning at work.[29] In addition, a similar percentage of students indicated that the ideas they had learnt were still useful to them, and a substantial number continued to consult their course materials after completion (an average of 47% consulted them quite or very often, and a further average of 45% consulted them occasionally). Three students commented:

> 'Some of the materials used were absolutely excellent, and I still use and share them with others on my full-time course now.'
>
> 'The course materials are currently one of the reference points for our firm that has just ventured into providing services in areas of gender and community-based sectors.'
>
> 'The learning from the course paralleled development needs and those or my organization and community very well.'

In what ways did students think their performance had been affected by this positive response to the programmes and to their learning? Many students said that they had been able to apply their learning at work. An average of 78% thought they had been able to apply their learning 'quite a lot' or 'a great deal' (although only 64% of the total overall, with the 'OU factor' influencing this result). Corroborating this self-reporting by students with the line manager responses, it was found that 87% of the line managers who responded to the survey thought that students had applied their learning 'quite a lot' or 'a great deal' (see Table A37).

Table 5.7 shows the responses of students to a series of questions about different aspects in which they may have changed as a result of their learning. The table also compares the summary data with responses from the line managers' survey. These data point to generally

---

level; the correlation with strategic approaches was .216, significant at the 1% level and there was no significant correlation between surface approaches to study and positive approaches to work.

[29] .57 (n = 311), significant at the 1% level.

positive outcomes, although some areas of change are stronger than others and the 'OU factor' makes itself evident in the total scores here. It is interesting that, again, line managers are somewhat more positive about the effects on their staff of the programmes than the students (see Table A44).

Table 5.7 Changes in students as a result of studies ('quite a lot' and 'a lot') (percent)

Type of change	Students (total of students)	Students (average of programme scores)	Line Managers (total)
Has become a more reflective learner	74	81	79
Has become more reflective in general	52	69	78
Is more confident	60	68	78
Puts forward ideas more	72	79	84
Makes more decisions	74	86	84
Takes more responsibility	64	77	80
Consults more with others	57	69	74
Analyses and investigates more before acting	64	77	72
Works more in teams	52	69	69

There are however some interesting differences between programmes (see Tables A27a-k for details). First students on all the Southern African programmes scored the effects of the programmes on themselves more highly than the OU students. The areas of greatest difference were: 'has become more reflective in general' (only 37% of OU respondents thought they had changed quite a lot or a lot); 'work more in teams' (again, only 37% of OU respondents thought they had changed quite a lot or a lot); and 'consult more with others' (47% of OU respondents only). In speculation, these data may say something about differences in working styles and approaches between students from or based in Europe and in Southern Africa, and a possibly greater team orientation in Southern Africa.

Another interesting difference is in the UNISA data: only 49% of respondents said they had gained quite a lot or a lot in confidence, much lower than for respondents on the other three programmes. However, in the open-ended part of the questionnaire, many students, including those from UNISA, commented that their studies had increased their confidence and had improved their professional mobility. Their line managers agree: a synthesis analysis of qualitative responses to the survey from line managers (26 respondents for the 73 UNISA students) suggested that 'because of their success in their studies and the additional knowledge they have gained, students have become significantly more confident and this has given them the platform for introducing new systems and procedures' (Ayele et al, 2002). Whether this dimension of student experience is simply about self-perception or specific to MBA students (and the attribution of such changes of this type to study) is an open question. However, as we shall see from the case study data, increased confidence was certainly an extremely important aspect of improved performance in cases chosen as positive examples of change.

From the open-ended data in the questionnaire, students cited particular skill areas that they had learnt to use or to apply more critically and confidently. For ZOU students, some of the most important areas were managing people in periods of change, carrying out more effective planning, working better with beneficiaries, being more professional with clients and donors, and being more able 'to deliver'. For OU students, who were studying similar courses, the main aspects where students thought they had improved their competencies were: logical framework analysis, project planning and evaluation; improving their strategic focus, developing a reflective practitioner culture, bringing in innovations in work practice, and

informal knowledge sharing. SAPES Trust students tended to mention their ability to help formulate policy and evaluate policy implementation, being more strategic, being more competent professionals, and being a resource for their organizations to enable them to achieve their goals or move into new areas. UNISA students also mentioned strategic thinking, better management of people and conflict situations, being more innovative and effective, taking a more prominent role in leadership and decision-making, especially during periods of organizational change.

Statistical analysis from the survey data on whether students' interaction with the programmes was significantly associated with changes in their performance and ability to apply their learning gave some positive results. Satisfaction with the programme in general was positively and significantly correlated with students' ability to apply learning and how they think they have changed in a general sense[30]. More obviously, that students learnt ideas useful for their work was quite highly correlated with applying learning.[31] However there are many further variables affecting students' application of learning at work and, more particularly, making a wider impact on the organization. This is where such things as status in the organization, being able to work with others to make changes, being able to share knowledge, a positive organizational environment (including support for students, and whether organizations were going through a process of change), as well as factors such as the students' own approaches to work, all come into play. Many of these factors are contextual and we return to them in Section 6, where we focus on the organization.

5.5.2 The case study story[32]

Turning to the insights from the case studies, although all students claimed to have improved their performance in their own job as a result of their studies (generally confirmed by line managers or other sources), more interesting is what the case studies tell us about the different ways that studying on these programmes impacted positively on students' work performance. Very often this was a more general impact than the application of specific new knowledge or skills. The case studies also tell us about why these students were able to change successfully. There were several general types of change: gaining confidence; taking a strategic view; changed management style; building on previous experience; better ability to cope with change; as well as application of specific tools or knowledge.

Confidence

Perhaps the commonest way of describing the effect of studying on how students approached their work was to say it gave them confidence or reassurance. This could come from feeling secure in knowing at least something about a range of techniques, from having better general knowledge of contextual issues, or from realising that success on an academic programme implied the ability to succeed in other areas where analytical or critical ability was required.

Particularly with respect to the management elements of programmes, there was an element of demystification. A student in UNISA CS1 (an energy corporation in South Africa), for example, had been promoted from a technical to a management position in charge of a team of technical experts. Having never thought of himself as a 'people person', he now had to manage people and deal with the problems they brought to the workplace. The UNISA MBA programme gave him confidence that he could apply a problem-solving approach, similar to what he was used to in technical matters, to management or people-related problems.

[30] Correlation of overall satisfaction with the programme with (i) extent to which students think they have changed and (ii) ability to apply learning in a general sense = .239 (n=313) and .369 (n=311) respectively, both significant at the 1% level.

[31] Correlation of learnt useful ideas for work with (i) extent to which students think they have changed and (ii) ability to apply learning in a general sense = .428 (n=314) and .566 (n=311) respectively, both significant at the 1% level.

[32] Some of the case studies referred to in this section are explained in more detail in the boxes in Section 6.

The other programmes combined an opportunity to acquire practical and analytical skills in management and policy with critical discussion of development issues. Thus students broadened their knowledge of development and their understanding of the issues. As a result several became more confident in representing their organization and taking part in external discussions with partners. This was noted particularly amongst students in three of our cases (SAPES CS 2 and CS3; MDASA CS2 - see Table 4.4 in Section 4).

In many cases, an important aspect of increased confidence was a willingness to challenge others on the basis of one's own judgement. In NGOs this can mean willingness to challenge donors. In the case of a student interviewed for OU CS2 - a children's NGO in Uganda - it was reported that

> '…the OU programme takes a critical approach to development management rather than simply teaching the 'best' way to use analytical and management tools, and this may have reassured [the student] that his own critical approach to the planning tools put forward by donors was a valid one.' (Case Study Report)

In public agencies or private firms, challenge is more likely to mean challenging one's superiors. In the case of a student working for a finance company in Zimbabwe (UNISA CS2):

> '…the deputy MD pointed out that the most obvious advantage the company has gained from her studies on the programme, is the amazing confidence she has gained as a result of what she has learnt on the course. This has led her to make a constructive and valuable contribution when there are meetings and discussions about the organization and what it is trying to achieve. She is the only person in the organization who is willing to ask questions and to question what is going on and to challenge management on the decisions they have taken.' (Case Study Report)

Taking a strategic view

Another general positive effect of studying these programmes was that many students were reported in various ways as taking a broader view of their organization's operations. Thus one student obtained 'a deeper sense of perspective', another now used 'a global framework of analysis, while a third had developed an ability 'to link local with global factors'. In one of the cases where a group was studying together (UNISA CS1 - the energy corporation in South Africa) - it was noted that:

> 'The company have found that the students from this programme have a practical strategic focus which is not present in a lot of the other senior managers. This is such a noticeable quality in the MBA students that they have been invited to participate in the annual senior management strategic planning session.' (Case Study Report)

This willingness and ability to take a strategic view, rather than confining oneself to the specific techniques required in one's own area, can derive from having studied a range of topics, ranging in management from finance to marketing to human resources and in development from the critical use of analytical planning tools to development theory and globalization. For some it can mean simply looking at all aspects of an organization's work together; for many it can also imply considering the place of the organization in its economic and political environment. It is tempting to suggest that the latter is more applicable to those working in development organizations compared to those in business firms, but the case of a student working in a footwear company in Lesotho (UNISA CS6) contradicts this. The student is reported as having moved as a result of his studies from 'operating as a short term task driven person' to 'a broader understanding … about business in general and what the needs of a business are and what the reasons are for the existence of a business'; moreover 'the importance of the wider environment became more of a point of focus' (Case Study Report).

Changed management style

In several cases students were reported as having changed their style of management. This was generally in the direction of a more open, culturally sensitive, people-centred, consultative style. At the same time, some students had become clearer about the expectations on themselves as managers and in turn were more prepared to lay out what they expected of others. In the case of one student, for example:

> 'Her primary focus is to get people involved and to do something to promote interdepartmental co-operation. She makes an effort to help people to understand what the implications of their actions or the lack of their actions are.' (UNISA CS2, Case Study Report)

For some, the change in management style was partly a direct result of adopting specific ideas and approaches from management courses dealing with managing people, motivation, managing change, leadership styles, and so on. For example, a student working for a re-training NGO in Lesotho (UNISA CS5), cited several specific frameworks from different modules which he had studied, which he referred to directly in order to guide how he went about relating to those he was managing. These included the 'Blake and Mouton grid', the 'seven steps in organizational development', the 'Johari window', the 'SHAMROCK structure', and the general approach to managing change. This student:

> '…took over the initiative in his area using the guidelines for managing change contained in his study materials. His first priority was to get the people on board and involved, and to help them to understand what the change was about ... what the impact of the change would be on the organization and also … on the individuals in the organization. This was not an easy task as the practical implication of the … initiative was that it would result in the retrenchment of a large number of project personnel.' (Case Study Report)

For most, a change in management style was also a corollary of a general increase in confidence. Feeling insecure in one's position as a manager could lead to the adoption of an authoritarian management style as a defensive measure, while greater confidence allowed students to be more collaborative and work more through teams. One student, who worked for the public sector in local government information (SAPES CS3), attributes her ability to ensure participation from members of her organization indirectly to the MPS programme. She learnt how to promote participation from the way lecturers encouraged students to interact and share ideas in group discussions, and the programme also 'strengthened her confidence and helped her to sharpen her communication skills' (Case Study Report).

Building on previous experience

In several cases, students' learning was clearly a process continuing from well before they enrolled on the programme we were interested in. The programme helped them to build their understanding and skills further, on the basis of previous understanding and skills. This of course is only to be expected. Taking an action learning' view, we would expect students to be constantly utilising their experience for learning - and translating learning into capacity and more experience - whether that experience is enhanced by their participation on a course of study or not.

In some cases there was clear reference to previous courses studied. Others had not studied previously except in their specialist technical field, so that learning management and development skills was quite new to them. Their study helped them to make sense of past experiences as well as to cope with, and influence, present changes.

Ability to cope with change

Another general improvement reported by some students was that they could cope with change better as a result of their studies. In some cases there was a deliberate policy in the organization: change was planned and part of the planning was to develop staff who could

manage that change, including registering one or more staff on a particular programme which was seen as offering practical as well as theoretical benefits. This could mean sponsoring the studies of individual members of staff or using a programme of study as a major part of a staff development programme with several or even large groups of staff registered for study at the same time. In other cases, being better able to cope with change was an unplanned but welcome outcome of study.

As with the previous point, this was for some a straightforward result of studying specific topics which could be applied directly, most notably the management of change (see the example of the student in the re-training NGO in Lesotho above). There were other skill areas taught in some of the programmes which could also be directly applied to help in coping with change, for example, analytical tools for the design and implementation of development interventions in GDM or MDASA, or concepts of policy dialogue and the stages of policy making in the MPS programme. The two students in the OU case studies in Uganda provided examples of the former (OU CS1 and 2). They used the technique of logical framework analysis together with a critical approach from the GDM programme and a number of other concepts from that programme in their organizations' respective planning processes. As an example of the latter, a student on the MPS programme was able to use the skill of policy dialogue gained in the programme to cope with a number of unexpected and politically vulnerable situations (SAPES CS2).

For others, being better able to cope with change was another corollary of increased confidence and a general reassurance that one now has the tools and approaches to deal with any kind of new problem that may arise. A student working in children's welfare in Zimbabwe is an example here (UNISA CS3). There were huge changes affecting his organization's work (the AIDS pandemic and its impact on an organization providing rather traditional services to orphaned children; the Zimbabwe government's land redistribution programme including compulsory acquisition of their farm). He was confronted with translating a response to these changes into local plans, and his studies gave him confidence that he could find tools to help him in the course materials whenever he needed them.

Application of specific tools or knowledge

Most of the case study students mentioned specific skills or knowledge which they were now able to apply to improve their performance. Interestingly, however, they saw the improvements deriving from the specific skills mostly as subordinate to the general improvements discussed above (confidence, strategic view, changed management style, ability to cope), and contributing to them.

There were, however, quite a lot of exceptions to this perception. All the SAPES Trust MPS students talked in terms of direct application of what they had learnt on particular courses which they had studied, for example on regional planning, gender analysis, negotiation and other policy skills. In one case, a SAPES Trust student worked in policy analysis was able to apply directly the skills gained from the MPS programme (SAPES CA4).

Some of the students were already in management positions where they knew their need for certain *specific* skills or knowledge and enrolled specifically to gain these skills. Other students, particularly those studying with GDM or MDASA, talked of directly applying *general* approaches or concepts to their work. For example, a Ugandan student working in rural capacity-building applied the concept of poverty as social exclusion, derived from one of her GDM courses, to getting members of her organization to re-think its overall direction in a participative planning workshop (OU CS1). Similarly, the Ugandan student working with children (OU CS2) said that:

> '…he introduced general ideas from the OU programme which he thought could be used in the process of developing the new country programme. … Some of these ideas were new to [his organization], for example the idea that development management involves external goals and value based conflicts, and hence the need for

> negotiations. This led him to arrange greater involvement of stakeholders in the planning process.' (Case Study Report)

How the above are inter-related
Generally the above types of change are strongly related to each other. Thus increased competence in specific skill areas and better knowledge of development issues underpin increased confidence and allow students to feel they can cope with change. Taking a strategic view rests on having a degree of understanding of specific areas, while changing one's management style requires confidence and may in turn enable one to cope with change.

Some students clearly changed simultaneously in all the ways reported. For others, however, perhaps only one of the types of change was paramount. We see in Section 6 how different patterns of change in individual students related to different changes in the organizations.

5.6 INTERACTIVE LEARNING OR LINEAR TRANSFERS OF KNOWLEDGE?

Looking at the case study data, there are many examples of learning interactions required by the design of the educational programme itself, most obviously student activities or assignments, set as part of a course, which required students to engage with their organization. But there are also many clear examples of direct application of knowledge or skills. These involve approaches, concepts or methods which a student internalised from their study of course materials and then applied.

5.6.1 Examples of learning interactions

There were several cases where students used their work done for an assignment directly in their organization. For example, one student (UNISA CS2) recalls that:

> '[One assignment] required her to focus on 'Conflict in the Workplace' and the students were required to describe a recent conflict situation and to explain how they should have gone about handling the situation, using the conflict handling techniques described in the material.
>
> [The assignment] proved to be a special and unexpected gift from the gods for her at the time; she was surrounded by people who were trying to find their places and their informal positions in a newly founded organization and all were jockeying for the most advantageous positions … Conflict was one of the most stable occurrences in the organization at the time as people felt they had to place themselves in an unassailable position of power while the situation was still fluid and possible to influence.
>
> The student found the recipe for handling the situation in the course materials. 'I used to run to the MD to tell him what people had done to me. No more. I learnt about the mature approach and choose to talk to the person direct and sort it out.' The student says that the insights she gained from reading the material helped her to understand people and their behaviour and this has helped her to follow 'a more mature approach' than in the past.' (Case Study Report)

In other cases students used their assignment work to bring about organizational change. Here are two examples:

> '[One assignment] involved writing a report on the strengths and weaknesses of the evaluation process in the organization. At the

> time the student wanted to get a donor organization to pay for an external evaluation; he changed just a few words from the [assignment] and sent it off to the donor and got a result. The external consultant was agreed to be paid for and came within three months. After three more months they were still 'in organised chaos', but as a result had clarified management roles.' (MDASA CS1 - a media organization in Zimbabwe; Case Study Report)
>
> 'I submitted [an assignment] on taking culture seriously in development. I prepared a case study of our Association's failed Life Insurance Scheme. I attributed the failure of this scheme, mainly on that fact that the elite members of the board and the secretariat staff (whose education is based on the British Colonial System) ignored the power of the taboos associated with preparing for death that most Ugandans strongly believe in. This case study was circulated to our board and to our programme officers and I have, on occasion, heard them refer to it…As a fundraising director, by focusing my analysis on this case study, I think I learnt a lot about the importance of being sensitive to culture as I propose or try to implement fundraising strategies.' (OU CS1 - rural capacity-building in Uganda; Case Study Report)

This type of assignment, that requires students to engage with their own organization or its context, is a specific feature of courses in the MDASA, OU and UNISA programmes. The SAPES Trust MPS does not feature this type of assignment, but as a block release programme it does put students together for an intensive period of study where they can learn from each other and share experiences. Thus:

> 'The MPS programme brings together men and women from varied backgrounds who are in the middle to senior level of management in their organizations. These bring to the programme case studies and practical experiences into the group discussions, lectures and seminars held as part of the learning process. The MPS programme has clear theoretical and practical linkages between what the MPS participants learn during lectures and what they practice at their workplaces.' (SAPES CS1; Case Study Report)

The MPS programme ends with a dissertation which requires course participants to research on topical issues related to their work and recommend policy changes to the policy makers. The OU and MDASA programmes also have a project course which is compulsory for completion of the masters, while UNISA includes such a project course as an option in the MBA. Such dissertation or projects are major examples of learning interactions which may in some cases be applied to have wide-ranging impacts on the students' organizations. One such example was a project done by one of the OU students on the organization of consultancy services, which included ideas that he immediately applied in practice in his department.

It is hard to disentangle the specific details of learning interactions where students reinforce their learning at the same time as trying out ideas within their organizations. Two clear expositions of this process come from students interviewed for cases from MDASA. Here is someone who worked for a development NGO (MDASA CS2):

> '[He stated:] 'practice informs learning and learning informs practice.' By comparison, if a full-time student had an assignment and was asked to present a case, they would probably rely on a textbook, but in this student's case his first port of call is his own experience. Also, as a learner, to consolidate, he looks to his working situation to see which skills are applicable.' (Case Study Report)

And here is a student who directed a micro-finance organization (MDASA CS4):

> ‘The programme’s questions are such that one cannot leave the practical aspect of one’s organization. In most of the activities, one relies on the experience within the organization to answer a question effectively. Skills are indirectly impacted on you.’ (Case Study Report)

5.6.2 Direct application of knowledge

There are also many clear examples of direct application of knowledge or skills. These involve approaches, concepts or methods which a student internalised from their study of course materials and then applied. Thus, in OU CS2 (the children’s organization in Uganda), the student claims to have directly adopted the ‘process approach’ and more specifically the ideas of participatory data collection and performance assessment. He says that ‘it is not yet a reflective approach, where specific ideas are tried and evaluated, but rather a general approach adopted from the course to improve lesson learning.’

In another case (SAPES CS3), the student used knowledge and skills gained from the MPS module on regional co-operation and integration directly while organising regional meetings and making presentations to such meetings. In a UNISA case study (CS3 - the children’s welfare organization in Zimbabwe), the student learnt and then used directly several techniques and concepts from his MBA courses, such as the categorization of organizational cultures, the importance of hierarchy, and the ‘eight-phase planning cycle’.

Most of the case studies afford at least some small examples of this type. However, it can be difficult to separate the idea of direct application of knowledge from that of a learning interaction initiated by the student. Thus in UNISA CS5, the re-training organization in Lesotho:

> ‘[The student] remembers that the Blake and Mouton management grid had made a particular impression on him. This to the extent that he went to his manager and alerted her to the fact that managers who, as she was doing at the time, focus just on the task, are likely to lose the involvement and support of the people in the change process. He found that this model had clear links to the psychological contract which was discussed in the course materials shortly afterwards. He explained to his manager that people come to work with certain expectations about what the workplace and the manager would do for them in exchange for their loyalty and labour. [The student] felt that his biggest gain in doing the programme had been that he had learnt how to manage and work with people during the change process.’ (Case Study Report)

5.6.3 Not ‘either-or’

Can one say if ‘learning interactions’ or ‘direct application’ gives a better explanation of impact on the individual learner and on how learners apply their knowledge in the workplace? Or have they both occurred and we are thus faced with a question of interpretation?

There was a tendency for SAPES Trust students to explain the process in terms of direct application and for OU and MDASA students to refer positively to the idea of being a ‘reflective practitioner’. This could merely be a reflection of the fact that the latter idea is presented within the OU courses as the basis for the pedagogic approach in those courses.

More than one student suggested that the two modes of learning and application apply to different areas or topics. Thus, for one MDASA student (MDASA CS2) there are certain areas where it is possible to have learning interactions because he both has some experience as a basis for comparison with ideas in the course materials and some opportunities in his work to try out skills and concepts. However, in other areas, notably gaining knowledge about

topics on which he has no direct experience, he has to assimilate that knowledge directly from his study and then apply it later if a relevant opportunity arises.

More generally, it is quite possible to see the two modes of learning as different ways of interpreting a complex process. Thus another MDASA student (MDASA CS1) said of the same course that it gave him 'an absolutely intense period of reflection, a very stressful time' and that it was 'linear – like a restaurant menu, you can take what you want.' Further, as noted above, the Ugandan student working with the children's organization (OU CS2) says he is 'not yet' using a reflective approach (i.e. as a reflective practitioner). However a meeting is planned with field workers at which they will critically reflect on the experience of two years of using the 'process approach.' One could argue that it is not necessary to be as deliberate as this in order to claim to be acting as a 'reflective practitioner'. On the contrary, it appears that this student is effectively being a 'reflective practitioner' already.

Thus far, one might conclude that the programmes are effective as far as students' own perceptions and expectations are concerned. It may not be helpful to argue whether 'learning interactions' or 'linear transfer/direct application' give a better explanation of the impact of an educational programme in this field. A well-designed programme will include opportunities for both processes to occur.

6 Organizational capacity-building and change

The bottom part or third element of our framework (C in the diagram) focuses on the organizations and how they relate to the students on the one hand and their business or development context on the other. How far do the organizations consciously engage with the educational programmes and the students' learning process? Do organizational practices change as a result of students' work?

This part of the framework is the most complex to investigate, but it potentially adds the most to our understanding of the dynamics of, and relationship between, individual and organizational learning. Does it take place as Argyris and Schön suggest in the quote in Section 3. To what extent does individual learning influence what organizations do through the direct application of new ideas and practices? To what extent are the ideas and practices mediated through a complex set of interactions that may result in organizational capacity-building, and/or may result in changes (including both the possibility that an organization becomes a 'learning organization' and the possibility that the individual/organizational dissonances described by Argyris and Schön cannot be resolved)? Finally, to what extent is it possible to attribute change to the impact of programmes on students and thence on their organizations, and what is the weight of other factors and processes that may have led to changes identified?

We find that the survey data provide a fairly simple 'story'. The case studies of positive individual and organizational experiences provide a number of complex scenarios in which the impact of programmes is embedded in much wider change processes generated both internally within organizations and by the wider contexts of which they are a part. Thus attribution of change to the impact of programmes is difficult to establish in many cases, and in the longer term, an ethnographic approach would have to be used. Nevertheless, the current study provides some important pointers for researchers, educationalists and those working in development organizations, not only for further investigation but also in terms of policy measures for a closer working relationship between the different actors.

6.1 CONTRIBUTING TO THE ORGANIZATION'S WORK

Turning first to some of the general features shown by the survey, we asked students to what extent they thought they had been able to make contributions of a strategic and more specific kind in their organizations as a result of their studies. The same questions were asked of line managers. Tables 6.1 and 6.2 show a comparison of the combined scores for moderate and major contributions (remembering that line manager respondents are only 23% of student respondents). The 'total' scores evince the influence of the OU students in the population, so for the Southern African programmes, the 'average' scores are more approximate (see Tables A23a-k in the Appendix for details). However, for most variables, OU students gave higher scores for 'minor contributions' than the other students, which might reflect the different range of student backgrounds in the OU cohorts, and possibly different organisational conditions than for the other students. There could also be differences in perception of previous knowledge and experience, and also of the extent to which one can influence change. Again, there are generally reasonably positive claims by students, particularly in the field of specific contributions. Line managers are again marginally more positive than students about the contributions they have made as a result of their studies, but more so in the strategic than the specific dimensions.

Table 6.1 Strategic aspects of organizational work to which students have been able to contribute as a result of their learning (moderate to major contributions) (percent)

Type of contribution	Students (total of all students)	Students (average of programme scores)	Line Managers (total scores)
Team work in organization	58	77	87
Communication and communication systems	49	64	73
The use of technology	33	46	50
Planning and budgeting	47	62	59
Managing information	50	67	77
Organizational systems: development and management	43	59	64
How the organization deals with beneficiaries or customers	47	61	67
Organizational culture (norms)	40	57	70
Organizational structure	35	50	52
Organizational strategy	46	62	65
Organizational objectives/mission	46	57	66

Table 6.2 Specific contributions, changes or improvements made by students as a result of their learning (moderate to major contributions) (percent)

Type of contribution	Students (total of all students)	Students (average of programme scores)	Line Managers (total scores)
The management of workload	61	76	81
Student's own performance or results	71	86	82
Internal relationships in the student's own workgroup	59	77	80
The performance or results of the student's own work team	55	73	78
Norms (culture) in the field	51	65	65
Relationships with organizations in the field	50	65	67
Positive social change or impact on development	47	62	66

In terms of how such contributions occurred, most students said that they either put forward ideas at meetings or explained specific techniques to others. They also tended to share their knowledge mostly with other colleagues, both in their own organizations and with colleagues in other organizations, although about half of the respondents also shared knowledge upwards to their bosses and senior management as well as to those who reported to them. We carried out a number or correlations to look more closely at the relationships between aspects of organizational context and the ways in which students can apply their learning in their organizations. A number of straightforward and positive, if not strong, correlations emerged, outlined in Table 6.3. For example, status in the organization was important for being able to make strategic contributions; the ability to work with others on the programme was significantly associated with making specific contributions; finding different ways of sharing knowledge and the student's own approaches to work were significantly associated with applying learning and making contributions, particularly of a strategic kind, to the organization's work.

Table 6.3 Correlation of several contextual variables with whether students have been able to apply learning and contribute to the organization's work

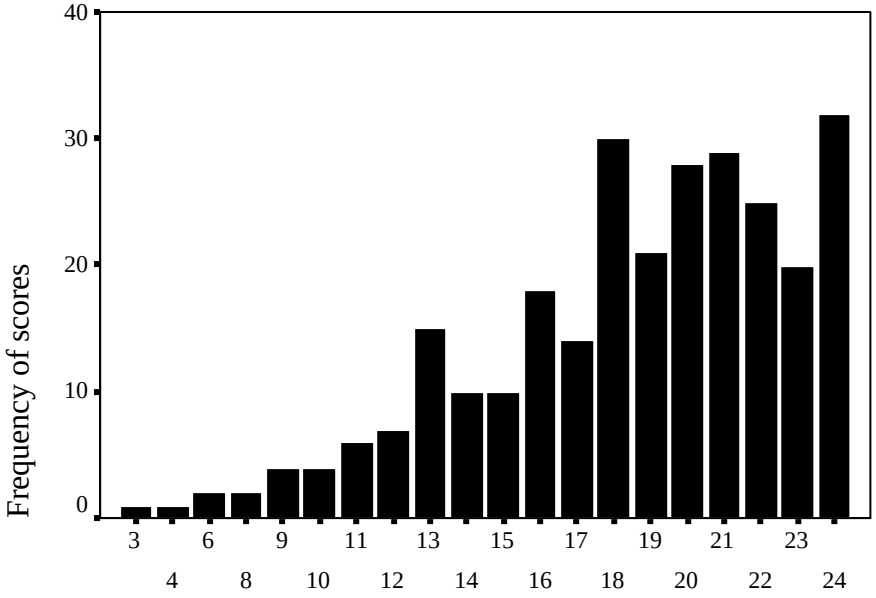
	Ability to apply learning to work in a general sense	Have made strategic contributions to organizations' work	Have made specific contributions to organizations' work
Own approaches to work	.397* (n=310)	.352* (n=306)	.277* (n=310)
Status in organization	.292* (n=306)	.443* (n=301)	.314* (n=306)
Able to work with others on the programme to make changes	.270* (n=251)	.393* (n=246)	.454* (n=251)
Number of ways have been able to share knowledge with others in organization	.353* (n=290)	.301* (n=288)	.282* (n=293)
Organizational support for student	.299* (n=260)	.373* (n=261)	.347* (n=262)
Overall positive environment in organization	.272* (n=306)	.259* (n=302)	.146* (n=307)
Extent of change in organization in past 5 years	.156* (n=274)	.176* (n=270)	.142** (n=274)

* = significant at the 1% level; ** = significant at the 5% level.

These results suggest a key role for sharing knowledge and working together in bringing about change both within and across organizations. This is a particularly important area in development where there is considerable fragmentation of effort (and thus results). When we carried out regressions with respect to major influences on the application of learning and the effects of students' learning on organizations, 'working together with others' played a significant role in relation to positive outcomes. So, indeed, did the organizational environment in terms of its openness and possibilities for students to apply their learning, and organizational support for students while they studied (Ayele et al, 2002). While these are not surprising results in themselves, they suggest that establishing and enabling learning communities or communities of practice (Wenger, 1998, 2002; also Johnson and Wilson, 2003a and b) may well enhance the effectiveness of applied studies in terms of their wider impact, as well as supporting individual students in their learning.

An additional contextual variable which emerges from the survey, suggesting something worthy of further exploration, is the extent to which there was a process of organizational change going on in the organization irrespective of the students' contributions. The graph below is based on 279 responses to the question 'how has this organization changed over the last 5 years?' Scores in excess of 16 for this question indicate that change was taking place in terms of expansion (funds, staff, clients, geographical area, number of activities, partnerships, sustainability), and a majority of the organizations referred to were in this position. There was also a weak but positive correlation between organizational change and students' contributions to their organization (see Table 6.3). This does not of course mean that change resulted from the students' contributions, but, as we will see from the case study data, ongoing processes of change provided an important contextual opportunity for students to make a difference to their organizations based on their learning.

Figure 6.1 Organizational change in last 5 yrs



Summed scores for aspects of organizational change

Both students and line managers were asked open-ended questions about *how* students had been able to apply their learning in such a way to bring about organizational capacity-building and change. It is impossible to capture the range of responses from a survey - the case studies address these issues in more depth below with respect to cases that were deemed to have experienced successful applications of learning and organizational change. Here we provide a selection of responses from the student survey as a taster of some of the opportunities and constraints.

Many of the students indicated positive ways in which they had been able to influence specific practices in their organization, for example:

> 'Able to set new administrative practices in some areas; enabled some team members to improve skills to make a better contribution to the organization.'
>
> 'I feel my most important contribution has been an endeavour to ensure efficient administration practices.'
>
> 'Developed operational guidelines for my department.'
>
> 'The most significant contribution was setting up objectives for my department.'
>
> 'I am busy instituting a complete System Development Life Cycle and the relevant processes and documentation that goes with such a project.'
>
> 'Setting up realistic strategic plans and objectives.'
>
> 'I have been able to implement the problem tree technique such that colleagues have learnt and we have come up with projects that are responsive to people's needs.'
>
> 'Restructuring of programmes implemented by the organization in the community. Introduction of a system of planning and monitoring for the organization's field staff.'

Others had been able to influence strategy:

> 'I used the knowledge I got from the course discussions of messes and traps to re-think our organisation's regionalisation programme and to propose ways in which to intensify it. I wrote a concept paper which is currently being utilised.'
>
> 'Initiating and developing a new national social protection strategy for Zimbabwe. Introducing new social risk management programmes for the poor in Zimbabwe.'
>
> 'Facilitating a strategic plan for Murehwa District in Zimbabwe. Institutionalizing gender by having gender focal points in all the seven offices.'

> ‘Within my circle of influence I think I managed the forced changes situation we were confronted with better than the other managers on my level. It was accepted more positively by the people under my command and my section became quickly more efficient.’

Yet others had been able to make major changes in the organization:

> ‘I led a complete restructure of the organisation which included defining a model to work to and resulting mission, vision and perhaps most importantly, values.’
>
> ‘I undertook a restructuring in a participatory way, in order to help a programme office have the right kind of staffing to enable it to be more programmatic. I hope to do something on organisational learning in the next few months.’
>
> ‘Implemented a new structure based on the Self-directed Work Team approach. I have developed a World Class Manufacturing strategy for my company.’
>
> ‘Developing the vision statement and the three year strategic plan of the branch. Development of the management committee structures.’

In analysing the qualitative date from the survey, most students gave positive feedback on how they had applied their learning and changed aspects of their organization’s work, and these data were supported on the whole by the line manager responses. Although such results are encouraging, in practice the data should be treated with some caution. First, students were asked many more questions about applying learning than they were asked about the obstacles to application, or their negative experiences. Thus there is likely to be a positive bias in the data. However, some students were more circumspect, in particular among OU students, whose responses presented a wider range of opinion than students from the other programmes for the reasons outlined earlier. As examples, two OU students said:

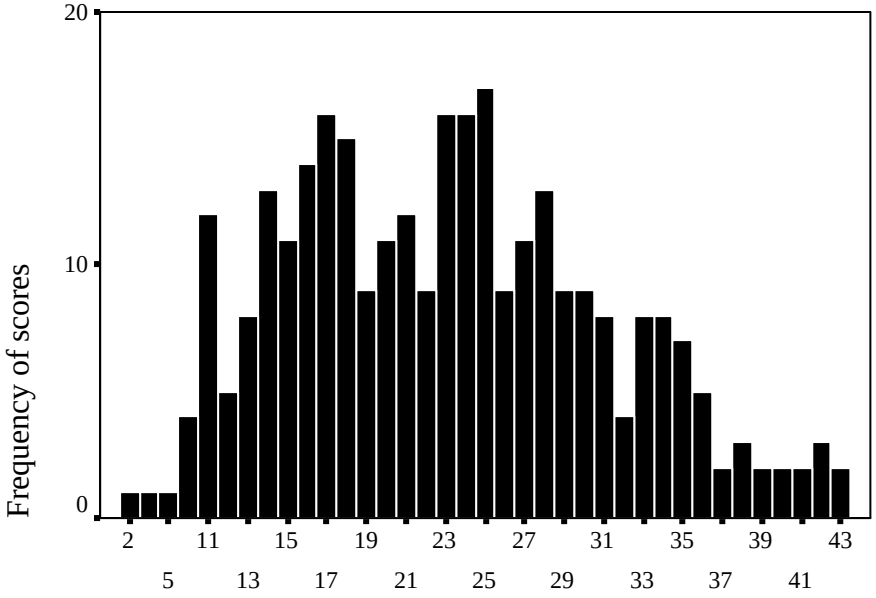
> ‘In such a large organization, I can’t really see how I have brought about changes through the course learning. The most important thing for me is the solid foundation it has given me in development management.’
>
> ‘I have little opportunity to influence changes within my organisation. My contribution has been sharing new perspectives and challenge status quo.’

Even one SAPES Trust student stated:

> ‘I assist with staff development programmes. Problem is that I am not given enough support.’

Students did face problems in applying their learning in their organizations. From the survey, 298 responses to questions about the kinds of problems faced gave the summed scores charted in Figure 6.2. In this instance, students were asked about obstacles such as organizational culture, lack of opportunity, learning not culturally relevant, organizations over-centralised, poor communication, aversion to change, unclear objectives or priorities, lack of incentives, new ideas not valued, difficult professional relationships. A maximum range of problems (‘always a problem’) gave a summed score of 44, while none of these factors being a problem would result in a score of 11. It can be seen from Figure 6.2 that few scores were 11 or less (and where they were less, not all questions had been checked by respondents). Equally there were few very high scores. In fact the chart shows a fairly ‘normal’ distribution of scores, indicating that certainly some of the obstacles to applying learning existed in the majority of cases, but there were very few cases where all the problems were present. Again, while not startling, these results are a reminder of the importance of organizational context for being able to benefit more widely from students’ learning - something that sponsors of students need to bear in mind. Issues of context are picked up in more detail by the case study analysis below.

Figure 6.2 Problems in applying learning



Summed scores for problems faced

The second aspect of our note of caution above lies in the issue of attribution. The nature of the questionnaire does not enable respondents to explain *why* they attribute the changes they have achieved within their organizations to their learning. In some answers, the changes are evident because they refer to specific skills, approaches and techniques used in the programmes. However, the bigger, more strategic, changes are much harder to pin down as a result of learning and application arising from the programmes. The case study analysis provides some clues as to how the wider changes may come about, and the extent to which the attribution issues can and cannot be resolved by this particular study.

6.2 TYPES OF IMPACT ON ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE

The organizations from which staff came as participants on these programmes varied in size, area of activity, sector, culture and many other ways (see Section 5.1). They provided very different contexts for organizational change and capacity building. The types and extent of change which students can create depend strongly on the particular context, as well as on factors like individual competences, ability to manage change, what students had learnt from their programme of study and how they applied it.

All organizations are constantly undergoing change to a greater or lesser extent. We found examples of externally driven organizational change and of planned change, with many cases combining these two categories, where organizations were forced to respond to external changes but were trying to plan that response. The nature of the organizational change already taking place, together with the position of the individual student or group of students in the organization, formed two very important aspects of context which affected the roles students could play.

We will look briefly at these contextual factors and then present the different outcomes.

6.2.1 Contextual factors: ongoing change and the potential for influence

In several cases there were large external changes driving organizational change. Two (one in the UK and one in South Africa) that had been state organizations were subject to pressure for privatisation. The one in South Africa was also under pressure to bring more racial balance into its management hierarchy following the end of apartheid. The latter pressure also applied to an organization in Lesotho. One UNISA case was forced to change its work with orphans because of the AIDS pandemic. A SAPES Trust case had to adapt to the changing electoral politics of Zimbabwe, while another Zimbabwe case had added a large food aid programme to its ongoing development work because of the worsening food security crisis.

In other cases there was planned change already in train. Two OU cases in Uganda were both beginning processes of producing new country programmes to cover several years, in the latter case following the localisation of the organization, with its Head Office moving from the UK to Kampala. Another OU case had adopted plans that specifically included staff development and internal capacity building, and this was an important reason behind its decision to sponsor a large number of students on the OU GDM programme, as well as on other study programmes. In a SAPES Trust and a UNISA case, the respective students were employed specifically to implement planned new initiatives. In a ZOU case there had been a recent merger and there was clear need for further change; the form the change would take only became clear during the student's time on the MDASA programme

In many of these cases, change actually combined these two categories. Thus organizations were forced to respond to external changes but were trying to plan that response. Those examples above which we categorised as ‘planned change’ could be seen in terms of responses to external forces. Similarly, in those examples where we identified large external changes there was generally a clear attempt to plan a response. For two or three cases, the plans included programmes of staff development, which involved sponsoring groups of students (in these cases on the MBA and GDM programmes). In other cases, local managers, including some of the students, were put in the position of having to try to plan and implement a response.

The other important contextual factor which influenced how far students could make an impact on organizational capacity or development was the particular position a student occupied in their organization (also demonstrated by the survey). This factor combined with the character of ongoing change to determine how much potential there was for that student to use their learning to influence that change. Some were heavily constrained while others had a great range of opportunities. The most constrained were middle managers within large organizations where there was little local flexibility - changes were either minimal or already agreed, unless they came from overwhelming external forces. Conversely, those with most opportunity to shape change were either directors of small organizations or heads of units where the local implementation of planned change or the detail of how to respond to external changes was yet to be worked out.

Thus, as with the discussion of students’ individual work performance in Section 6 above, at the organizational level we can identify a number of types of change associated with students taking part in the programmes. In turn these tend to be combined with changes at the individual level such as greater confidence and a more strategic view on the part of students. At the organizational level, however, several of the types of change apply specifically to certain contexts, so we get a number of distinct patterns, some of which may occur in combination:

- Change throughout a small organization where the director is a student
- Constrained change within a large organization
- Planned improvement in organizational capacity to deliver change
- Specific ideas or frameworks being used for new organizational policies

- Changing management style and organizational culture
- Better coping with forced change.

6.2.2 Change in a small organization where the director is a student

Some of the most noticeable organizational changes occurred where the Director of a small NGO or other organization studied one of the programmes and applied what they were learning to their organization as a whole. There were probably relatively few cases of this sort in relation to the total population of students and graduates of the four programmes, but they were prominent among the case studies, probably because they were cases where changes could readily be attributed directly to the impact of the programmes. In these cases it could be difficult to distinguish between the students' own performance in their job as Director and the organizational changes which they were in a position to implement as part of their job.

These were situations where the student was able to apply ideas from the programme he or she was studying to make far-reaching changes. It worked best if change was known to be necessary already, perhaps because of external forces, but the form the organization's response should take could be shaped by the student. There was a need for the student to work to spread understanding of the ideas they were using within the organization, both to gain support for proposed changes and so that the improved organizational capacity did not rest in themselves alone.

MDASA CS1 and OU CS2 are the best examples of this type of change. It will be remembered, referring back to Table 4.4 in Section 4, that these were a media organization in Zimbabwe and Ugandan NGO working with children respectively. In both these cases the specific changes were not determined by the course material and indeed they were already under way before the respective Directors began their studies. What studying did was to give these two students, in their very different organizations, the tools and concepts, and above all the confidence, to work out a particular form for the changes and push them through effectively.

Thus, in MDASA CS1, the student was originally co-director of a merged organization with 22 staff in an environment with more and more uncertainty. He 'knew emotionally that the only way was to split' and his study 'gave him the concepts to explain felt differences and the analytical tools to find ways to resolve it', as well as 'confidence to go beyond emotions and come to a conclusion'. For him, the most significant organization benefit from his study was 'Clearer focus on what we do and why we do it', and he was able to apply his learning to 'restructuring different units with different values and missions in their work'. He ended up running his own part of the business as a separate NGO with only 5 staff but a clear emphasis on development communications and a strong empowerment value basis.

In OU CS2, the student claimed that his study of the OU GDM programme was instrumental in shifting his organization to a 'process approach'. Once again, however, the fact of change could not be attributed to his studying the programme, as it was underway already. It was the way it was done and the outcomes which were affected by this person's studying with the OU. This case is described in more detail in Box 6.1 below.

In such cases one may ask how thoroughgoing the changes are in terms of increased capacity throughout the organization. To what extent are the staff fully involved and committed to the changes as opposed to simply trying to satisfy on their Director's new requirements? Both students were keen to share their learning with others in the organization, but had limited opportunities to do so. They also both stated that they hoped others from their staff could study the same programme, but it was unlikely, for reasons of financial constraint in a small organization, that this would occur in the near future.

It is worth noting that not all the cases where students were directors of small organizations were like this. In two other cases (MDASA CS3 and SAPES CS2), for example, the respective students used their studies to gain skills and knowledge which they could apply to specific aspects of their job as director of their particular organization. They also gained overall confidence and a broad framework for analysis, particularly in the latter case. But in these cases the overall tasks and general approach of the organizations concerned were more or less fixed, at least during the period in question.

Box 6.1 A small children's NGO

OU CS2 is a Ugandan NGO which since 1987 has run field-based services for disabled children, or 'children with disability' (CWDs). It now has 30 staff and works in 13 out of 56 districts of the country. Originally set up by British expatriates, the NGO has become fully localised, with its Head Office moving in 2000 from London to Kampala. The director is a student on the OU GDM programme.

The field offices all use local government staff, from education, health and social services departments at district level. They form teams of professionals to assess individual children and follow up their progress. Activities include running special clinics within the government health service, using government staff and passing data to the District Medical Officer. In education, they provide special equipment and work on integrating the needs of CWDs in ordinary schools into teacher training. Then with social services it's a question of counselling parents, raising awareness, and perhaps promoting economic empowerment for parents.

Recently, the NGO's aims have shifted from service provision to promoting the rights of disabled children. Nationally there is now a larger government budget, and priorities have shifted to development and anti-poverty measures. For example, there is government and donor support for Universal Primary Education, with primary school fees paid for up to four children per family and priority to CWDs. The main function of the NGO's Head Office now is national level lobbying and policy work. They aim to get the needs of CWDs taken into account in all poverty alleviation policies, not have a special fund for them. Donors would like the NGO to move to 100% lobbying, but the NGO feels it is important to retain some field work, to have a close understanding of real cases and also to maintain staff satisfaction. In addition, they may be able to innovate as an NGO, and since they work with local government staff this can change government attitudes.

Overall the director claims that the GDM programme has been instrumental in his shifting the organization to a 'process approach'. He sees this both as 'a means of organisational learning through the action-learning-planning process' and as a way 'to help build trust with our partners through participation in the process'.

This shift has occurred in the period since 2000 when the NGO became fully localised. This move was already causing new thinking in the organization, and a rights-based lobbying approach was adopted. The staff structure had to be changed, and a new country programme had to be developed. Thus new conditions and the need for new ideas gave the student the opportunity to promote changes.

Part of the new 'process approach' is that, whereas they used to have a 5-year programme with specified outputs to be attained, now a formal process of periodic review and consultation with stakeholders is applied both at district and national levels. It is expected that within the broad outlines of the strategic plan each district 'thinks' for itself, and adjusts to opportunities that present themselves. This process also helps in organising information, since it automatically provides quarterly and annual reports from all the districts, and the programme department at Head Office puts those together fairly readily for the annual review at national level.

The director also introduced general ideas from the OU programme, some of which were new to the NGO, in the following areas:

General approach to development management. For the director, this includes the idea of contested goals and the need for negotiations and occasional confrontation. He said that this 'opens one's mind to other players and the need to understand other perspectives'. There used to be talk about networking but real partnerships never got going. Now, however, the NGO is discussing how to work together seriously with, for example, the National Disabled People's Association, and has regular 6-monthly review meetings with partners (ministries and NGOs) focused on possible joint activities.

Relations with donors. One important area in which the director has applied the 'process approach' has been in respect of the log frame matrices which the NGO has had to do for various donors. They did one two years ago for DFID which specified outputs, activities and indicators in some detail. Now, however, under the director's leadership, the NGO has been challenging them, pointing out that as things change they cannot insist on precisely the same list of activities or the same indicators that were agreed two years before. DFID have allowed them to change some activities and indicators; the director hopes other donors will be equally flexible.

Adoption of participatory research in district level planning and evaluation. Staff from the NGO used to go from Head Office to talk to a few people in a district and then write a plan centrally for each district. Now they use specific ideas from one of the OU courses to plan participatory data collection. In the area of evaluation, the director has instituted participatory performance assessment based on ideas from another OU course, relating it directly to the district steering committees and their quarterly reviews of activities.

The director has shown at least two other staff members material from his OU programme. However, his main difficulty has been in getting people to understand the changes he was trying to introduce:

> 'I am the one doing the course, the others are not, so they cannot see things the way I see them and in some cases there is resistance because of fear of the unknown. Once people are used to doing things in a particular way they resist change especially where they do not fully understand the changes being introduced.'

As Executive Director, the student has been able to influence the whole organisation. It is sometimes possible for him to get others to take changes on board without fully understanding them, although he tries to avoid this. He makes proposals and consults, so his ideas are not always adopted without some change, but generally he is able to mould policy.

Overall, he reports considerable impact on the organization's capacity, which he claims has come about through his promotion of programme ideas. We can infer that his performance has also been affected positively, although it is possible that he would have been equally effective as a leader in promoting other ideas.

The director claims that many of the changes in how the organization runs itself have been a direct application of ideas learnt on the GDM programme to the organization as a whole. It is not so much a question of the application of specific knowledge and skills, but rather the adoption of general ideas. The most important has been the 'process approach', but the general view of development taken from the programme has also had an effect, particularly in external relations such as building networks, lobbying, and policy work. Partly these changes have resulted from his direct implementation of general ideas from the programme, and partly by the programme acting to give him confidence in articulating development issues, as well as reassurance in the critical approach which he was already taking.

6.2.3 Constrained change within a large organization

In some cases students were constrained by the need to conform to standard procedures and/or external forces. Particularly within large or bureaucratic organizations, individuals were very unlikely to be able to effect wide-ranging changes. The extent to which they could apply their learning, even if they were the head of a department or other organizational unit, was restricted to using changes in how they did their own job to catalyse changes in *how* things were done within their own unit. This might mean implementing better systems, new forms of delegation, more consultation, or other localised improvements. However, *what* was done remained subject to wider constraints. Nevertheless, such students could have the potential for making greater organizational or development impact in the future.

SAPES CS1 - in the area of social development in the public sector in Zimbabwe (see Table 4.4) - is a good example here and is further described in Box 6.2. Having studied the MPS, the student shared his enhanced understanding of social issues with some of his counterparts and subordinates through position papers and departmental meetings. As a result he was able to change the way some of his department's projects were carried out, insisting on gender considerations and making the policy process more consultative. However, the extent of possible change was constrained by bureaucratic procedures, by the specifications of donors such as the World Bank, and by the political requirements of the government. The advice of officers like this student may be ignored, whether or not it is based on improved analysis as a result of studying a particular programme.

In the different context of the local office of an international NGO, a student in MDASA CS2 (a development NGO in Zimbabwe) was similarly constrained in how he could make changes. He was able to use skills learnt from the MDASA programme, such as the distinction between evaluation for learning or for accountability, in his work with local partner organizations and hence play a part in making some of these partnerships more strategic. However, this was within strong constraints. According to the student, he 'tried to 'streamline' skills from MDASA into [his organization] with not much change, fitting into the existing mission, strategy and approach'. In addition, having to respond to the deteriorating food security situation in Zimbabwe meant that the NGO had to shift from development work to food aid, and hence reporting systems for partners became more stringent in order to meet donor requirements. This change required the student to work sensitively in order not to put too much strain on relationships, and strongly limited the possibilities for developing these relationships further.

A third example, in a very different context again, is provided by UNISA C4, the subsidiary of an international motor vehicle company in South Africa. Here the student was appointed to head a market initiative in a new location for the South African subsidiary, after two previous appointments had failed in the position. He found that in this new location 'an unhealthy organizational culture existed at the time and [he] had to face the reality of virtually having to start the business operation from scratch.' He was already studying the UNISA MBA and used both the direct knowledge and skills derived from the programme and the broader, contextual knowledge and confidence gained to reorganise and systematise the local organization. However, this was entirely within the fixed task set by the parent company of setting up that particular initiative.

Box 6.2 A Government Department

SAPES CS1 is a department in the Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare. It is part of a wider social protection strategy that seeks to reduce hardships and address poverty issues at the community level. The major functions of the department are to co-ordinate social protection initiatives, micro-enterprise development and integrated poverty programmes throughout the country, to act as one source of finance and integrate this with external funds, and to formulate the social policies underlying such initiatives.

As director of the department, the student was the most senior of three officers supported on the SAPES Trust MPS Programme by the Ministry. The Ministry viewed the MPS Programme as unique in the SADC region in seeking to combine theory with participants' practical experiences and encouraging students to write dissertations that address policy issues affecting their organizations.

The student has long experience as a public servant in local government, a university and several ministries which included dealing with social policy issues, but, according to him, before joining the MPS he lacked solid theory to comprehend them. He claims that since completing the MPS Programme he is able to analyse government policies affecting the department from a multi-dimensional angle including political-economic-social and gender perspectives. As director, he has managed to impart some of the knowledge gained to his counterparts and subordinates through position papers and meetings. According to the Permanent Secretary, his contribution to both departmental and inter-ministerial meetings is much more 'enlightened' than before he went for the MPS programme. He uses some of the materials from the MPS programme to illustrate how policies are formulated, implemented, monitored and evaluated.

However, a clear definitive impact on the department is not very easy to pinpoint. The department interacts with many government departments, most of the procedures are clearly laid out, and an officer is expected to follow these procedures.

Nevertheless, the student claims that ideas from the MPS programme have made some impact. He has been able to suggest more efficient ways of implementing and monitoring some of the projects being run under his department. The Ministry also now insists on gender considerations for all its policies, while the policy making process has become more 'consultative' in nature – a view that is shared by the Permanent Secretary. For example, they ran more local workshops than usual for possible beneficiaries before implementing the new Social Protection Programme, encouraging discussions that encompassed socio-economic political and gender issues. The student's Permanent Secretary also gave the example of a scheme for financial assistance to vulnerable children of school going age, which had a 'facelift' after the department shifted to a system where people at the community level are encouraged to use their traditional decision-making structures and notions of poverty to identify who should get funds.

The student has been aware of political appointees who want implementation of certain policies to be fast-tracked for political mileage. His zeal to use his new knowledge to influence policy has been able to take account of these. However, he experienced problems when he advised on the handling of the 'one billion dollar project'. He advised that the money be distributed through micro-finance institutions but politicians wanted the money to be disbursed more quickly and directly to the recipients. The battle is not only with policy makers who are mainly politicians but also between his department and donor agencies. For example, although analysis from the MPS programme may show that World Bank policies are not beneficial for the recipient communities, the Ministry needs funds to implement some of its programmes. Hence advice from people like this MPS student is not heeded because of this and other political and economic constraints faced by the recipient Government.

Despite such constraints, overall the MPS programme has improved the student's confidence in leading the department as well as in his interactions with other players in the social policy arena – internationally, regionally and nationally. It has made some impact on how he as director carries out policy formulation, implementation and co-ordination in his department and the broader Ministry, and through him on how the department plans and carries out its poverty eradication programme.

6.2.4 Planned improvement in organizational capacity to deliver change

In several cases, organizations were planning change and included developing staff competencies by supporting them on appropriate programmes of study as a deliberate part of their plans. These plans may have been internally generated; more often, organizations saw external changes forcing a response from them, and part of this response was to plan for improved organizational capacity in the form of up-and-coming staff who would be able to manage change.

This logic could well apply to small organizations supporting individual students, as with MDASA CS2 mentioned above. However, even here the policy was part of a general strategy on the part of the parent international NGO (which happened to be OU CS3, an international development NGO based in the UK). Such cases were more often large organizations where a group of staff was sponsored on one of the programmes, and given support and recognition as well as opportunities to apply what they learnt (to a greater or lesser extent, depending on their position in the organization).

There were two other cases of this type, namely OU CS4 and UNISA CS1. OU CS4 is a department in an international public sector institution in the UK that is privatising its consultancy work and trying to plan wider changes in the organization. Two students interviewed in this case study were a Senior Education Specialist and the Head of Business Development. At the time of the case study, 30 people had taken courses in GDM and another 30 had participated in lunch-time study based on a particular GDM module, instigated by the Senior Education Specialist. According to him, this staff development and education programme enabled the department to see partnerships and relationships differently. Previously they always wanted to be the lead partner. Their expectations of partnership have changed – they are more prepared to listen, and are not threatened by choosing partners who have similar expertise, realising that they can also learn from the partnerships. He thinks that the department has learned how to describe its own capabilities better and to recognise its own weaknesses.

In UNISA CS1, a public sector energy provider facing privatization, there was also a group of students sponsored on the UNISA MBA. The group even had a name within the organization: ‘The Young Professionals’. The fact that they were enthusiastic, entrepreneurial, confident and oriented towards a strategic view of their position in the organization led to their being given a special position within the organization and its change strategy, for example being invited to take part in strategic planning workshops alongside senior managers. Clearly an important feature of these cases was that students had a peer group to refer to who would have a common understanding of key concepts from the study programme as well as a common orientation towards learning and reflective practice. This peer group would be instrumental in re-affirming the importance of learning to each student and also would help each of them to maintain their confidence in themselves and their ability to manage change by using concepts and skills gained from the programme of study. This case is described in more detail in Box 6.3.

Box 6.3 A public corporation undergoing privatization

UNISA CS1 is a former South African State Corporation started in the early 1960s by the Nationalist Government. It has been going through severe change. After the election of the democratic government in South Africa in 1994, the government subsidy was cut substantially over a number of years, and the personnel were retrenched in large numbers. The new Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) were given the task of turning the organization into a commercially viable operation and to ensure that the staff and management reflected the demographics of the country.

With a new name, the corporation embarked on an aggressive recruitment campaign to find qualified black personnel with commercial skills and younger managers to take the business into the future. The OUBS MBA Programme was seen as a relatively quick way for technically qualified people with management potential to become competent managers. The corporation initially nominated 10 carefully selected and tested people who displayed good leadership potential for the MBA Programme. Since then, their success on the programme, coupled with their improved performance as managers, has prompted the corporation to have 20 people on the programme at any time. It is starting to show an operating profit, is making good progress towards commercial viability, and has an international reputation for technical excellence in its field.

One of the students manages a section setting up storage facilities in different parts of the country. He is convinced that his ability to do this job results largely from what he learnt on the programme. He came to the corporation in 1996 as a research scientist. He admits to having had absolutely no knowledge about business in general at the time and he knew even less about managing people. The first module was 'a big shock and an eye opener. I did not know that interpersonal skills are so important and that you have to have good interpersonal skills in order to become a good manager and a good leader.'

Another student joined the corporation as a laboratory technician in 1992. The corporation sponsored his studies in chemistry and most recently on the UNISA MBA. The course materials were effective in providing the knowledge, skill and the confidence for him to move from being a technical specialist to becoming a competent manager of people. The student never thought of himself as a 'people person'. The course provided an incredible opportunity for him to learn about people, what motivates them and what could be done by management to manage them better. He looks genuinely surprised about the fact that he has taken over the management of his department and is now managing the people in it with some ease and without any major problems. The organization is aware of the impact that the studies have had on him and of the extent to which he has grown and developed. His promotion was a direct result of this awareness.

Both students took part in the formation and subsequent activities of an organization called 'The Young Professionals', which was established within the corporation. One of them, in particular, realised that he had to do something to get a process going to share his knowledge and to try and gain momentum for the MBA Programme in the company. He discussed this with the senior management team and gained their support for 'The Young Professionals', in which all the students on the MBA Programme got together on a regular basis to discuss issues pertaining to the organization in general and identify situations in the workplace to which concepts from the course could be applied. It also enabled them to provide each other with help and support in an organization where the young, black managers were not getting a lot of informal guidance and support from the older, established managers.

The students found that 'The Young Professionals' provided a valuable forum in that they had a mouthpiece through which matters which were of concern to the young managers and new entrants into the management field could be brought to the attention of senior management and even to the CEO of the Company, who became an active supporter of 'The Young Professionals' and what they were trying to achieve.

The students

Early on in his studies one of the students realised that it would be a futile exercise to obtain this qualification if he did not apply this knowledge to his management task. In spite of the fact that the organization is set on a new course and has a black CEO, something of the 'old' management style and approach is still alive in some of the departments. It is still common for young, black managers to be excluded from discussions and decision making. The student feels that the emphasis on the management of change in the course materials has made it possible for him to work with this situation

and to achieve a softening of attitudes much sooner and more effectively than would otherwise have been possible.

He also feels that he has gained valuable insight into the process of planning effectively. He is currently in charge of project teams consisting of outside consultants who are responsible for setting up and commissioning storage facilities throughout the country. This is a complex task requiring him to manage these consultants although he is not their actual line manager, and would have been impossible for him without the knowledge he had gained in the various 'Management of People' sections of the programme. As a result of applying principles from this part of the materials, he is able to maintain effective control over these project teams. There is general agreement within the organisation that there has never been such a strong and positive relationship with outside project teams as there is now.

The second student is responsible for managing 20 people in his department and for obtaining results through them. This is a big and unnerving jump for a scientific specialist, but so far the management team has been very impressed by the results the department is producing. The MBA provided him with the broader perspective which a manager needs to help him understand the practical implications of decisions, which may still be about essentially scientific processes, but which also needs an understanding of commercial viability. After only a couple of months, it is already clear that he has a much wider perspective than was usual for the management of his department in the past. He wants to know what contribution they are making towards the corporation and where the corporation wants to be in the future. This because he wants to assist in getting the organization to this objective through the work of his department. His vision, however, goes even further - he is interested in the role the corporation could play in the wider South African context.

The organization

Going beyond the impact of individuals, the transformation process itself within the corporation has most probably been the biggest beneficiary of the MBA Programme as a result of the work which has been done by 'The Young Professionals'. Newly appointed young managers want to join the body and to become part of the positive work which is being done by it. Even at senior management level, no decisions which affect the people in the organization are taken without the input and advice of 'The Young Professionals'. This presents a major turnaround for an organization which was operating at a level of top secrecy about eight years ago and where decisions were taken in line with the tough and very undemocratic culture which prevailed at the time.

The corporation has been sending young, aspirant managers on similar programmes run by other institutions but the results have not been nearly as encouraging. The students from the UNISA MBA programme have a practical strategic focus which is not present in a lot of the other senior managers. This is such a noticeable quality in the MBA students that they were invited to participate in the annual senior management strategic planning session - a major breakthrough in terms of the transparency objectives of the organization which also assisted in the attempts to make the organization more democratic. The students were able to add an important and valuable dimension to the strategic planning process and the senior management team was impressed with their input.

The students from the programme are being seen and experienced as adding immense value to the transformational objectives of the business. They have all, without any exception, been put in charge of projects with a major dimension of renewal and done excellent work on them. These projects required their managers to think outside of the box and do things which have not been attempted in the organization or even in the industry before. It is felt that the strong focus prevailing in the programme around people management made it possible for these managers to take their subordinates with them in the changes which they have initiated. This is significant against the background that all

these students moved into departments as senior managers where they met with considerable ill feeling and negativity from those they were required to manage.

6.2.5 Specific ideas or frameworks being used for new organizational policies

Specific ideas and frameworks were the most direct way in which a programme could impact on an organization. It involved a student in designing, getting agreement for and implementing a policy or procedure based directly on concepts or approaches in one of the courses.

There was at least one case where specific ideas from one of the programmes were used as the basis for new organizational policies. In OU CS3 - an international development NGO - the concept of learning cycles was taken from one of the OU courses and used in developing a formal system of monitoring and review. In this case also, ideas from another course were incorporated into an interactive tool kit for use across the whole organization. In MDASA CS4, a micro-finance NGO in Zimbabwe, the student (who was also the director) used concepts from the MDASA programme directly in designing performance management and induction workshops for staff.

In smaller or larger ways, there were a number of instances where course ideas were directly incorporated into new practices and procedures. Another example was the introduction of time logs to change the staff appraisal system in OU CS1, a rural capacity-building NGO in Uganda. This case is described in Box 6.4.

Box 6.4 A rural capacity building NGO

This Ugandan NGO grew out of a project started around 1990 by Quaker Service Norway (QSN). This project involved running 'change agent training' (CAT), using a rather specific methodology devised by the then QSN resident representative. The CAT methodology was based on Freirean ideas from a UNDP programme in Sri Lanka, and was used with groups at village level and then in a more advanced form at a broader geographical level.

Originally the NGO was like an alumni association for those who completed the broader-level, more advanced change agent training. However, the NGO started running CAT itself, and in 1997 things shifted so that the NGO was running everything and the QSN resident representative became its Executive Secretary.

The OU GDM student was Fundraising Director for the NGO. She worked as Administrative Secretary since graduating in 1992, first in QSN and then in the NGO, before being promoted to her present position. Over this period the NGO has grown fast. In September 2002 (date of case study), it had over a thousand members, many of whom work voluntarily for the association, organised along democratic principles of self-reliance. The governance of the association is through a system of regional and national committees composed of representatives elected from the membership. There is also a growing staff in the Head Office plus a growing network of Regional Offices.

Growth is the NGO's main problem. They want to grow while maintaining their democratic principles, building up their network of change agents with a long-term view and no way of knowing what change they will promote in the end. They need donor support for organizational maintenance while they grow, which is hard to justify in terms of project outputs. On the other hand, the donors want projects with short-term poverty alleviation outputs.

Growth requires organizational change, with more formality of structures, in order to cope. But for this NGO, this process should be within the context of their democratic principles of self-reliance.

The student claims both to have acquired specific knowledge and techniques from the GDM programme which she has applied to her work in the NGO and that there have been a lot of specific organizational changes which she has promoted, which are direct adoptions of ideas from the programme. However, it is not clear whether these changes are as fully attributable to the OU programme as she claims. Perhaps someone so clearly capable of high quality analytical thinking and creativity as her would have benefited equally from any intellectual stimulus.

She is the only OU student in the NGO. She is in a privileged position in the organization, reporting directly to the Executive Secretary and deputising for him. It is easy for her to discuss new ideas with him. More formally, she can put forward papers for approval. She has also more than once facilitated workshops for a cross-section of staff and members including material from the OU programme. One was on 'What is the logic of the log frame?', while another explored understandings of what is meant by development and by poverty, shifting from a perspective of needs assessment to the concept of poverty as social exclusion. She thinks that she was able to use the overall approach of the OU to development to influence the NGO's current planning.

Generally, then, it is difficult to separate the effect of the programme on her own performance from its effect on the organization. However, she has clearly learnt specific skills and increased her understanding of various techniques.

The student gave some specific examples of knowledge or techniques acquired from the OU courses which she has applied more in the organization as a whole than in improving her own performance. One related to time logs and staff appraisal. The student changed the staff appraisal system by using the idea of keeping a time log from one of the GDM courses. She got every staff member to keep a time log for one month. Then they compared what they actually did with their job descriptions. She calculated the hours each person spent on each aspect of their job description. This was used as data for staff appraisal. Each person had to agree it was correct, explore why there were differences (e.g. sometimes *no* time spent on certain aspects) and then agree a revised job description. This brought out several interesting conclusions. For example, the Executive Secretary's log showed he was spending too much time on the detail of other people's work, when he should have been concentrating on policy and external relations. Also, the administrative staff had clever ways of avoiding things – too much of other staff's time was spent on administration. This exercise pointed up the need for some redundancies, a problem in itself.

One of the major resolutions that resulted from this whole process was the realisation that the position of Administrative Secretary had to be split into two positions. The NGO now has the positions of Administrative Officer and Accounts Assistant. It was also realised that the person hired as Administrative Secretary at that time did not have the skills to handle the work in that position and this was one of the contributing reasons as to why her contract was terminated. In addition, the student successfully proposed the merging of the two departments – Programme and Administration – because they needed so much from each other and they really needed to be headed by the same person, so that the work would be more co-ordinated. Also, for a period of about 6 months, she introduced short weekly administrative staff meetings during which the Administrative Assistants' workloads were discussed and more proportionately distributed. Even though staff are no longer logging their work-time at the moment, she thinks that at least the Association has a tool in its institutional memory that is known to be effective and could be used again if need arises.

This student is able to initiate organizational innovations in the NGO irrespective of the OU programme she is following. However, the NGO has benefited from her studies. There are organizational changes that can be interpreted both as 'direct application' of skills and knowledge from the programme on the student's part and as 'learning interactions' where she used the interaction of course ideas with the organizational context to enhance her own and the organization's learning.

6.2.6 Changing organizational culture

These cases combined an organizational change towards a more inclusive culture with students reporting changed management styles, generally in the direction of a more open, consultative style. The latter could be the result of adopting ideas on leadership, motivation or change management from a management course, as in Box 6.3 above. It could also result from adopting ideas on participation from a development course, or simply from increased confidence.

In some cases the change in organizational culture resulted from the need to accommodate the more open and consultative style of management. Even one person's changed management style could be a catalyst for a change in organizational culture away from the authoritarian and towards a team-based culture. This dynamic was also described in Box 6.3.

The director of MDASA CS1 - the Zimbabwean media organization - related this aspect to his view of the predominant organizational culture in Zimbabwe. According to him:

> 'Zimbabwe has a command and control management culture, and 'you have to temper management style to fit culture'. He noted the importance of finding ways of getting junior staff to be involved, getting them to show initiative when this is perhaps not expected. He is a white manager in a predominantly black organization so has to tread carefully. What he got from the module on 'group-think' seems to be relevant – the need to change the organizational mindset to being multi-cultural and gender-sensitive.'

In other cases, change in organizational culture was even more clearly related to such differences. In both UNISA CS1 (Box 6.3) there was a deliberate effort to change management culture from predominantly white to multi-cultural. 'The Young Professionals' were all or almost all up-and-coming black managers in an organization which had previously had a racial divide between white management and black workforce. Similarly, in UNISA CS6 - a footwear manufacturing company in Lesotho- the MBA student was the first senior black manager and took upon himself a role of 'bridging cultures', involving conflict resolution and trouble-shooting across the organization (Box 6.5). There certainly appears to be a link between the open, reflective approach to learning promoted in all these programmes and a shift away from authoritarian organizational culture towards consultation, multi-culturalism and team-working.

Box 6.5 A Footwear Manufacturing Company

UNISA CS6, in Lesotho, consists of a number of factories which manufacture shoes for the lower to middle level price bracket, mostly for exported to South African retailers.

The UNISA MBA student is the only senior manager who is a Lesotho national. All the others at this level in the organization are expatriates. The student joined the company in 1987 as a store keeper. He had a period away working on the mines in South Africa, when he worked his way up from unskilled positions to being a training officer. He returned to the company in 1994 to a general management position at a time when the

organization was in a sharp expansion phase. He had to carve out a niche for himself in this process, finding new and unexpected tasks assigned to him on a daily basis. He was responsible for the buying of the stock, the controlling of the production processes and for the employment of people. He also had to assume responsibility for the production planning process, as well as being customer relations manager with respect to all the retailers to which the organization sells its merchandise in South Africa and Lesotho.

He began his MBA studies out of a sheer need to develop himself. Even though the company was positive about his participation, they would not contribute anything initially, although, once they saw him M making progress in his studies, he was able to convince them to sponsor him.

The student had a tough time coping in his job and his focus tended to be very much on the short term, directed solely by the day-to-day demands of the General Manager. He feels that the biggest overall value gained from the programme so far has been the realization that there is something more important than what the manager or the managers in the organization want. He started to understand that the organization could not survive over the longer term if it was not for the customer and the organization's ability and willingness to respond to the needs of the customer. 'The customer has to benefit from what we are doing in the business and from the decisions which we take in the business.' This understanding affected his working processes and management style, as it made him do things with a clearer ultimate focus in mind.

Two more specific early insights from the programme were an improved understanding of the importance of teamwork and the realisation that he had been lacking in his own leadership approach: 'if the leader does not have a clear understanding of where he is and what he is to achieve, his followers will not have a good sense of purpose about them either.'

The factories, and the way that they have been set up, contain a lot of opportunity for conflict and misunderstanding. People from vastly different backgrounds come together in this workplace to try and achieve their daily objectives. The management team, with the exception of the student himself, are made up of expatriates while the workers on the floor and at the lower levels in the organization are all Basotho.

The study materials in the programme brought home to the student the realization that the conflict, which he saw happening on the factory floor on a daily basis, was to a large extent the result of these people coming from such different backgrounds. The cultural differences between people results in misunderstanding and wrong perceptions which cause expectations that are not easily satisfied in the working environment.

The study materials highlighted the important role that these perceptions, caused by different backgrounds, have in the interpersonal communication which takes place on the factory floor. He started to understand that there was a reason for one group always accusing the other of 'having bad habits in the workplace'. He started to understand people better and initiated a role for himself of promoting a better understanding in the ranks of the expatriate managers. He took informal opportunities to explain to them the role played by cultural differences and the way in which this impacts on their perceptions about each other and on their communication.

He has initiated the use of suggestion boxes in all the factories and he has also started the internal company newsletter which appears on a regular basis. He feels that this could do something about strengthening the psychological contract between management and workers and it could also add another dimension in terms of enhancing the two way communication process between the two parties.

The student's manager concurs with this and is of the opinion that he has made a name for himself as someone who goes in and finds solutions when there are problems between

management and staff on the factory floor. He is often called in by different departments when there are 'problems with difficult managers'.

There have been other insights that he has applied in broadening his approach to his job. For example, focusing on the importance of the wider environment led him to initiate discussions with local government officials on reducing the damage done to the physical environment by the manner in which the organization was simply dumping its effluent from the factories.

However, the advantage he has gained from the studies can perhaps be summed up in the confidence and broader understanding he has about business in general. The practical implication of this learning can be seen in how he now goes about reporting to Head Office. In the past 'they would see us as an extension of the Head Office, they would ask and we would run. I did not understand and they did not understand the need for two-way communication and how valuable it could be for a manager.'

6.2.7 Better coping with forced change

Many of the 18 case study organizations were faced with huge external changes which threatened to overwhelm them unless they were able to respond robustly and purposefully. The main contribution from the educational programmes was to give the students confidence in their ability to cope. This was based more on a general awareness that they could call on a whole portfolio of concepts and techniques if necessary than on any particular one of these.

Both UNISA CS1 and OU CS4 (see above) had been large state organizations which were obliged to undergo different degrees of privatisation and to adapt to market pressures. A degree of entrepreneurialism and an appreciation of the global context in which they worked was now an absolute requirement for survival, and having large groups of students on the MBA and GDM programmes respectively assisted them considerably in this.

MDASA CS2 - a development NGO in Zimbabwe, part of a larger international organization - was undergoing carefully planned strategic change when it was obliged to adapt to take on large amounts of food aid in addition to its ongoing development work, as mentioned above. This affected the student's work considerably, but he was able to utilise his learning to manage the way the change impacted on him and his relationship with his organization's local partners. This case is further described in Box 6.6 below.

The student in UNISA CS3 - a children's welfare NGO in Zimbabwe - was in a somewhat similar position. In this case it was the spread of AIDS which completely overturned the NGO's previous ways of working with orphans. Although the student was Deputy Director, he was charged with implementing a specific change as a response to this crisis, namely to implement community-based programmes for care of AIDS orphans alongside the established direct provision of residential care for children.

As we can see from these examples, very often organizational change is occurring already and students' learning serves to give them and their organizations confidence and coping skills. Students are not necessarily proactively instigating change.

Box 6.6 A branch of an international development NGO

MDASA CS2 is the Harare office of a UK-based Catholic NGO with development programmes in over 40 countries. (This 'parent' NGO was also the subject of a case study, OU CS3.) Until 1997 all work was done from London, but since then there has been partial regionalisation, in which the Harare office was set up covering Zimbabwe, Zambia and Malawi.

Since the mid-1990s, the London-based international NGO has been undergoing a change process mediated by an organization development (OD) consultancy firm. As part of this process they have invested in staff development and sponsored managers to study various professional courses including the OU Development Management programme. Before being posted to Harare, the current Regional Representative there himself had studied one OU module, which was also one of the modules in the MDASA programme. He himself claims that this module enabled him to lead change in the organization and has since arranged for several staff from Zimbabwean and Zambian partner organizations to be sponsored on the MDASA programme, and the student in this case study from the Harare office itself.

The student in the Harare office joined the NGO as an administrator at the end of 2000 and has since become Programme Support Officer. In this time, as part of the planned change process the number of programme staff has doubled from two to four. The NGO is non-operational, working with both church and non-church organizations as 'implementing partners' in Zambia, Malawi and Zimbabwe. The student's new role is to provide support to these partner organisations. As a 'relief and development' agency, the parent NGO also provides emergency support, including food aid, in reaction to natural disasters and political emergencies.

Because of food shortages in late 2001 and early 2002 the NGO was running big food aid programs in Binga and Matabeleland South in Zimbabwe, funded by DFID. This means that, in addition to the planned expansion, at June 2002 there were two more staff working on food aid, who, although originally short term, were then expected to be kept on for at least another year. The development work continued, with a ring-fenced budget, but 80% of the total budget for the three countries was being spent on food aid. Food shortages were worsening in this region so the NGO will be expected to continue tackling the food emergency in Southern Africa as well as being a development organization.

Emphasis on food aid affects how the NGO works with partners. Compared with ongoing development work, there is a similar approach to the role of the community, reporting systems, etc., but with big differences, e.g. on timing and funding structures. Food aid needs a quicker response, so reports are required from partners monthly or quarterly instead of six-monthly or annually. Food aid is DFID funded rather than from general funds, which are more flexible. Hence there is a stricter report format, requiring use of logframe. This 'provides an additional dimension of challenge' in relating to partners. If a partner doesn't know how to use logframe, the NGO either carries out a workshop and works alongside to show them or else takes the old report format and puts it into DFID format in the NGO office. This means that they have to be sensitive, but not too insistent; because there is a potential for strain in the relationship.

The student has found that his studies enabled him to manage critical issues that crop up as he interacts with various stakeholders within and outside his organization in the process just described. He thinks that the knowledge he acquired from MDASA may even have helped him to perform better when he was interviewed for his current job by using concepts about understanding inter-organizational relationships, and hence to gain promotion to the position of Programme Support Officer. He can certainly say his study has given him more personal confidence to work in his new role.

Focusing on food aid, he has made a big impact on planning. He worked with the Regional Representative, assessing partner proposals and making their own proposals to DFID. He made some very specific use of skills gained from MDASA, e.g. skills on analysing inter-agency relations. This is important because emergency work tends to be messy and difficult to co-ordinate. He also used specific techniques from the programme in analysing partners' proposals.

Even if one could be certain that the student's good performance in his new post stemmed specifically from his MDASA studies, it would be difficult to attribute organizational

change to the MDASA programme. The NGO has also been involved in a local OD programme, which makes it doubly difficult to attribute changes specifically to the influence of MDASA. In any case, the student thinks it is too early to expect change in the organization as a result of his studies. Although he always has ideas from the courses in his head, he realises that you have to move from appreciating to intervening. He has started to get a good appreciation of the inter-organizational arena in which his NGO operates, but has not yet got to the stage of acting for change.

The Regional Representative has a vision of how staff who have studied with the MDASA programme might make a big impact not only in the NGO itself but with its partners. For example, partner organizations (especially church partners) can be inward-looking. Having studied with MDASA, the student in this case may be able to draw them into discussions on, for example, Poverty Reduction Strategy Plans or the Zambian Global AIDS Fund. He is in the position of 'being a multiplier' with respect to his relations with partners, maybe relaying ideas to them.

When the student was asked to comment about his involvement with the MDASA programme, he said that it was interactive rather than linear…For example, he might use stakeholder analysis with a double purpose. First, he would get a specific task accomplished. Second, he would then sit back and reflect, ask himself how useful this is, maybe identify some limitations, and would then be able to use this critique in future. At the same time, he states: 'you can't say the linear model is not applicable.'

In conclusion, although it is not possible to attribute organizational change to this student's studies on the MDASA programme, the student is now in a position to assist his NGO to be more focused in implementing its vision and mission, even with the huge changes brought by the need to contribute to the food emergency.

6.3 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN INDIVIDUALS AND ORGANIZATIONS, CONTEXT AND CHANGE

Despite the very different patterns, the case studies can be taken with the survey to point to some general conclusions on how the educational programmes impact on organizational capacity building and change.

From the survey, it emerged that an overall positive environment in the organization (opportunities for individual and group reflection, knowledge sharing, flexible work practices, innovation and so on) was conducive to students' being able to apply their learning and contribute to organizational change and capacity-building. This is not a surprising result in itself, but the data begin to suggest the kinds of scenario that educationalists and development organizations might work towards in maximising the benefits and effectiveness of education programmes in building capacity at both individual and organizational levels.

An optimum scenario would include, on the part of the student:
- deep and strategic approaches to study;
- positive approaches to work.

It would also include factors more within the control of the educational institutions and employing organizations:
- relevant programme content for work practices;
- support for students from their organizations and opportunities to put their learning into action;

- means of sharing knowledge and working together in communities of practice to bring about innovation and change.[33]

From the case studies, we can say a little more about these last three factors. First, the educational programmes had to be directly relevant before students could use them to improve their performance or to impact on their organizations. Some of the most important aspects of programmes that made them immediately relevant in this way included:

- general concepts or approaches that can be applied to the whole of an organizations work, such as: poverty as social exclusion; development management as involving external social goals and value based conflicts; policy dialogue and stages of policy analysis; gender analysis; policy as process; management of change;
- an approach to the development of analytical tools which was critical as well as practical;
- 'learning interactions' involving application of course ideas to organizational or development contexts as part of the course design, in the form of student activities, assignments, projects or dissertations.

Second, support from the employer was clearly an important aspect both of student learning and in enabling impact on organizational capacity. One form this took was in supplying opportunities for 'learning interactions'. As we have seen, such opportunities depended a lot on organizational context, but the employer's attitude was also important particularly in helping to overcome, at least partially, the constraints found in larger organizations. Other aspects of employer support included giving recognition to the importance of the study programme, and facilitating contact between students where there was a group. The case studies did not bring out questions of practical support, whether financial or in terms of time off for study, but these are likely to be very important.

Third, students also ideally need access to some form of 'learning community' to complement their interaction with their study programme on the one hand and their organization on the other. In some cases, when a group of students was sponsored together from the same organization, that group formed a kind of 'community of practice' which may have supplied this function. In other cases, individual students attempted to spread their learning to others in their organization, and often wanted to enrol colleagues, arguing that the impact of a group would be proportionately greater than that of a number of individuals. MPS students often cited the interaction between them as a group as a very positive aspect of their studies, and self-help or tutorial groups might have some of the same function for the distance learners, although these case studies did not reveal much of this.[34]

We should also remember that a student may have increased capacity to manage change without necessarily being involved in organizational change at all. The two are not the same thing. Sometimes opportunities are just not there to allow individuals to demonstrate their potential. Also, capacity is not restricted to single organizations and may be carried by individuals when they move from one organization to another. Some students move jobs, or even organizations, as a direct result of their study increasing their capacity or their employability. Others move simply in the normal course of life or career progression. Although there were two examples amongst our case study students for whom this applied, in general the case studies were not representative of students who moved jobs or organizations. Rather than judge the increase in capacity by whether or not there is actual organizational change which can be attributed to learning from one of the programmes, one might have to

[33] These particular conclusions were drawn from regressions carried out on the survey results to see which variables had most influence on the application and contributions to the organization. The scenario outlined here was the optimal one.

[34] Although not investigated in this study directly, we also know that, amongst ZOU students, peer study groups were formed for students to discuss their learning and support each other through the study programme; similar groups exist amongst OU students in Uganda. In addition, SAPES Trust students have an alumni association, and one has now been established amongst the OU GDM students.

consider the possibility of increased capacity across a whole sector, maybe the development sector in a particular country. Another source of support for developing capacity can be learning communities or communities of practice, which may be set up either within a single large organization or across several organizations in a sector.[35]

Returning to our framework presented in Figure 3.1, one question posed was whether a better explanation of programme impact is given by the notion of linear application of knowledge and skills or by that of 'learning interactions', learning cycles, and more generally the 'reflective practitioner' approach. Here the conclusion from the case studies was that it is not a question of 'either-or', but 'both-and'. Some areas of impact (e.g. use of specific frameworks for new policies) are better explained by the idea of linear application; others (e.g. better coping with forced change as a result of increased confidence) are better explained in terms of learning interactions and learning cycles. It is also possible to interpret the same impact using both sets of explanatory concepts. But using the idea of linear application by itself is limited. For a full picture of how organizational capacity impact can work it is necessary to utilise the concepts of 'learning interactions' and the 'reflective practitioner' approach. This does not apply only to how an individual learns. The relationship between individual learning and organizational capacity building is also interactive as well as linear. Organizational change assists individual learning in many ways; individual learning can then in turn assist organizational change. As we have suggested in Figure 3.1, the relationship between educational programmes, individuals and organizations is based on a range of interlocking social interactions flowing in different directions.

Finally, is there anything in how educational programmes impact on organizational capacity that is specific to the area of development? At first glance, most of the important factors seem to be general ones that apply to any kind of organization: skills and concepts must be relevant; there has to be opportunity for application; employers must give support. However, there is potentially a synergy of approach between

- the development of individual students through their learning
- a developmental approach to organizational capacity building (e.g. through the promotion of consultative management styles and inclusive organizational cultures)
- and a broader approach to human development, involving learning, capacity building and social inclusion.

Our final section of the report looks at some of the policy issues arising from this possible synergy.

[35] SAPES Trust alumni activities go some way towards this, and it is anticipated that the OU's alumni association will have a similar function.

7 Policy issues

A number of important points come through from this study. As might be anticipated, the interactions in the framework we set out in Section 4 are not simple or of one type. There are many factors and processes that affect the outcomes of the interactions. Amongst the most important that we have identified are:

1. *Interactive and experiential programme design* that enables students to related study and experience and become 'reflective practitioners'; this approach can take place through materials design and through forms of assessment that require students to apply their learning; it can be by distance learning or face to face.

2. *Programme content*, most of all its relevance to students' work and professional needs, and, as we have seen from the case studies, providing students with perspectives and tools for managing and coping with change, whether forced or planned or both. In other words, the impact of these programmes was through the possibility of the content being applied to work situations; they were not simply theoretical courses of study for their own sake.

3. The *characteristics of students*, in particular their approaches to studying and their approaches to work. On one hand, deep and strategic approaches to study are related to attempts to apply learning - it seems that a combination of both are needed, that is, being goal-oriented as well as reflective and transformative. On the other hand, students' positive approaches to work were also correlated with their ability to apply their learning. However, as we argue below, no educationalists and employers should take these characteristics as given.

4. Organizational context in terms of *students' own work situations*: positive support from employers and an organizational environment that is conducive to application of learning, innovation and to enabling staff to work in 'learning communities' to apply new ideas and practices. In particular, such experiences seem to be particularly successful if they involve staff who have been studying on the same programme, although enabling such staff to train and work with others not on the programme is also important.

5. The *status of students* within organizations: again this is not uni-dimensional. Students do not have to be bosses of organizations to be able to apply their learning and influence capacity-building and change, although they may have a greater chance of the latter, and even more so if they are head of a small organization. They can also be heads of sections or have other strategic roles (the boss's ear). The key aspect is their position within the organization's structure - although this may also change through study and demonstration of learning.

6. *Structural opportunities* to apply learning: by this we mean not simply that the organization supports the student's learning by offering opportunities to put ideas and skills into practice, but that the processes of change taking place in the organization provide spaces for intervention and innovation. As we have seen from the case studies, these structural opportunities include processes of planned and forced change - either in response to external drivers and/or in response to internal organizational needs. Such opportunities may be wide open (e.g. if the student is a director controlling a small organization), and they may be more constrained (e.g. if the organization is large and complex, or the external circumstances influence to a large extent the kinds of changes that can take place).

7. Finally, *lack of opportunity* both to apply learning and influence the organization. One obvious reason is that some students may not be in work at the time of study. For

those that are, this lack may be for structural reasons (e.g. position in the organization, difficult work relations, unsympathetic line managers/employers, environment not conducive to innovation), because of the characteristics of the student, or because of limitations in the nature of the work that the student is doing.

We have also seen that applying learning takes place through the direct applications of skills, frameworks and techniques as well as through interactive processes such as having to manage change. As we said at the end of Section 6: organizational change assists individual learning in many ways; individual learning can then assist organizational change.

So what are the policy issues that arise from this study and findings? Much of what we say below relates to conceptualizing development as an approach to or way of thinking about and doing things, not simply a set of goals or targets, important though the latter are. Conceptualizing development in this way suggests that learning and change are key processes to bring about different ways of thinking and doing, hence our focus on individual and organizational learning in Section 3. For the authors of this report, learning is a key driver for development and change. Yet learning for development has to be informed by developmental values. In Section 6 we mentioned consultation and social inclusion. We might also have mentioned social equality, and the opportunity and freedom to realise capacities and capabilities. However, such values are not simply those pertaining to individuals. They also need to be institutionalised in social organization, and in the organizations in which people work or through which they act. This again is a learning cycle, as we suggested in Sections 3 and 6. Individuals need the opportunities to learn for development and so do organizations. Therefore the interaction between individual and organizational capacity-building and the realization of capabilities are key aspects of the development process. A question for policy is how to bring these together in the context of education for development policy and management. We look at four overlapping areas:

- Programme design
- Links between programmes and organizations
- Organizational dynamics
- Going beyond organizations.

7.1 PROGRAMME DESIGN

In Section 3, we referred to an experiential and reflective practitioner model of teaching and learning. The effectiveness of this model in applied programmes in DPAM is borne out by this study. Thinking about how such an approach can be incorporated or enhanced in education programmes is thus a key policy issue for educationalists. First, it cannot simply be 'bolted on' through assignments, even though the role of assignments is important. The way a course is designed and the interactions between materials/teachers and students need to be planned throughout to achieve their learning objectives. Even then, how learning objectives are achieved is dependent partly on the students as 'independent' as well as 'dependent variables' - so the programme also has to encourage and develop particular learning styles. Second, opportunities for evaluation and re-design also need to be present. Third, such processes can, in some circumstances, be enhanced by electronic means, although some words of caution are needed here. Electronic learning takes many forms and it is often assumed that the transmission of information through the web is sufficient basis for teaching and learning. This is not the basis, however, of the experiential and reflective practitioner approach, which requires as much or even more careful design if attempted electronically.

Programme design also includes programme content. While it may seem obvious that the relevance of programme content to work needs is associated with applying learning, in practice the range of professional 'contents' needed for building individual and organizational capacities are beyond any particular programme. In addition, programmes of study have traditionally been designed by educationalists without regard to the needs of practising

professionals. However educationalists are more frequently being urged to develop consumer- rather than producer-led programmes. Although this is often for financial considerations (the education 'market'), for both educationalists and students it is important to have clarity of focus and expectations. In addition, thinking back to the definition of learning we gave in Section 3[36] it is through the interaction between programme content and the workplace that meaning can be given, value can added through practice and reflection, and the potential for transformation can be enhanced. This is the process we try to encapsulate in the individual learning cycle in Figure 3.1

However, given the variety of organizational and development contexts and the fact that students will typically go on to apply their learning in contexts other than the one they were in when they first registered on a course, there can never be a complete match between curriculum and the learning needs of students. Hence it is not as easy as it at first sounds to translate curriculum relevance into improved programme design. As suggested above, concentrating on facilitating 'learning interactions' may be one way of making a course more relevant, as it allows students to bring reflection on real experiences into the educational programme itself. However, some students are more constrained than others in their opportunities for application and for 'learning interactions', which implies at least some consideration should be given to alternatives to assist the learning of students in differing organizational contexts. To some extent, this assistance can be provided in the face to face class-room through simulations (as, for example, in OU residential schools) and in specially designed simulations on the web (for example, in negotiation skills). Another way forward is to enable the development of learning communities or communities of practice between students on the programme, for example through alumni associations and practitioner networks, where experiences can be shared. In some face to face programmes, application can be carried out through placements, if properly designed. The sharing of experience and knowledge, and the building of new knowledge, can be created through practitioner to practitioner methods as has been seen in non-formal schemes (see Johnson and Wilson, 2003a and b).

7.2 LINKS BETWEEN PROGRAMMES AND ORGANIZATIONS

There is a current debate in the UK about the changing nature of higher education in relation to the needs of students and employers. This debate focuses in part on the role of employers in defining what kinds of programmes and courses they think are needed for their workforce (to the extent of establishing collaborative and specially tailored qualifications), and in part on how to design and assess work-based education that builds on and adds to students' experience (for example, in the caring professions). This debate is relevant for education and individual and organizational capacity-building in development policy and management. What kinds of links are needed between educational institutions/programmes and organizations working in and for social and economic development, whether state, NGO or commercial?

As suggested above, the involvement of user organizations in programme design is one way forward. Such a process does not have to be to the extent of collaborative qualifications - it can include having staff from target organizations thinking about appropriate content, providing material, reading and commenting on specially prepared texts, carrying out some of the face to face teaching or providing tutors, and providing placements and apprenticeships or providing their own employees with opportunities to apply learning and put into practice new ideas. However any education programme in DPAM embarking on this route needs to be

[36] Learning is 'an active process in which meanings are constructed by the learner as they interact with and internalise the substance of the teaching they encounter'(Baker et al, 1996, p.102). Students are seen as building on and transforming existing knowledge and skills, '[integrating] new and old knowledge in ways that demonstrate a personal grasp and an ability to apply their knowledge to new contexts' (ibid)

aware of the transaction costs involved in building such relationships with employer or user organizations, as well as of the likely increased benefits to students' learning and organizational capacities. In addition, the benefits may not be reaped directly by the educational institution as they may not translate into traditional measures of educational performance. There may however be indirect benefits for the reputation of the educational institution or programme as it becomes known for its quality of interactive learning and contribution to capacity-building.

7.3 ORGANIZATIONAL DYNAMICS

What is in it for the employing organizations? As indicated by a number of the case studies in this study, many staff were sponsored by their organizations as part of staff development programmes, often in the context of planned change, or planning in relation to coping with forced change. From seeing programmes in DPAM as a means to develop the capacities of individual staff, and thereby, it is assumed, enhance the capacities of the organization, this study suggests that, for organizational as well as individual capacity-building, the organization itself needs to learn from the programme. One mechanism for this to occur is through providing opportunities for the staff in training to work with others to make changes - such as in the example of 'The Young Professionals' in one of our case studies, and the development of internal training schemes based on programme materials in another case. In these cases, the groups became both 'learning communities' (through their study of and reflection on the courses or materials from courses) and 'communities of practice' (through their application of learning) in the organization. In supporting such processes, organizations as well as individuals can learn (see Chapter 3). However such processes can also be seen as threats as well as opportunities, particularly if radical changes are proposed, or such groupings become (or seem to become) an oppositional force or voice of dissent within the organization. This is where the overall positive organizational environment that allows for openness and dialogue becomes important, as indicated in our study results. It is also where the broader mechanisms for organizational learning are needed, the subject of much recent management literature and practice.

7.4 GOING BEYOND ORGANIZATIONS

Finally, the 'training for transformation' literature suggests that a three-way partnership between the organization, the participant, and the training establishment is needed for transformation to occur (Lynton and Pareek, 2000). This is an ideal which could be translated to educational programmes for DPAM. However, as suggested above, the best programmes will also include a range of mechanisms to assist students to learn and build their developmental capacities irrespective of organizational context. Such provision should be an educational aim, given that not all students will be well supported by their employers, or in positions where they can implement direct practical applications of their learning. In addition, as mentioned above, some students/staff may be trying to being about change against some opposition in their own organizations. These considerations underline the need for learning communities and communities of practice that go beyond specific organizations. There is a need for DPAM to become a recognised field of study and practice which transcends organizational and national boundaries, and helps to create and reinforce change agents and leaders with particular values and skills.

7.5 WHAT FURTHER CAN BE DONE? SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

The policy issues above can be acted on by:

- educationalists and institutions that teach programmes in DPAM (even though these findings have relevance for any programme of applied study)

- organizations and enterprises requiring staff with DPAM skills
- donors and sponsors supporting capacity-building through education and training.

We make the following recommendations.

7.5.1 Educationalists and institutions that teach programmes in DPAM

1. The four programmes in this study can be taken as examples of the kind of study that can be promoted more extensively, to increase the numbers of students, spread their geographical scope, and support the launch of new programmes on similar interactive learning principles. Course design and teaching should blend theory and practice using case studies, audio and/or video material as well as interactive/participative approaches. Interactive learning can be between the materials and students' own experience (through assignments, projects and dissertations) and/or between groups of students in peer study groups (in or across organizations) and/or communities of practice in and also across organizations. Good courses probably need the first of these and one of the other group processes, which may mean engaging with sponsoring organizations in the course design.

2. Organizational support has been seen to improve individuals' work performance and help build capacity, so educational programmes should try to encourage organizations to provide opportunities for applying learning as well as practical support. Case studies of organizations that have used the programme to good effect could be provided to organizations sponsoring students, to suggest ways in which they can support students and benefit from the programmes.

3. Those providing educational programmes in DPAM should encourage learning communities and communities of practice, either within single organizations or across several organizations in a sector. Programme providers should support the initiation and promotion of alumni associations, especially as many will have a regional or global reach. Such associations can themselves form international communities of practice around themes and shared concerns, and act as a means for ongoing learning and professional development.

4. The relevance of content imported from other educational programmes should be enhanced with materials focusing on locally pertinent issues, cases and examples. In the case of Europe, Southern and East Africa, the main socio-economic and political contexts of the students in this study, there are many universal concepts and frameworks, but there are also many specifics (such as labour law and other law, political systems and governance structures). Although group discussions and general teaching methodologies allow students to focus on work experience and the exposure they have had in their own organizations - which gives the programme a powerful, local context - teaching can be improved with additional specific inputs. A more collaborative approach to course development is needed, particularly where courses are for an international studentship, by having international course teams, bringing in material from different contexts and organizations, and by consulting user during the process of course design, as suggested above.

5. Teaching and research programmes should inform each other - both in content and approaches - just as learning and practice (practice informs learning and learning informs practice); this process will enhance the impact of the programmes on students and their organizations.

6. Wider impact assessment of education and training programmes on individual and organizational capacities can provide and much more complete measure of educational effectiveness than relying only on course results. Educational institutions

should seek to build such assessment into their reviews and evaluations of particular programmes.

7.5.2 Organizations and enterprises requiring staff with DPAM skills

1. Organizations need to understand the potential of providing support to students as part of a staff development package, and should ensure that line managers and other relevant staff are briefed whenever an organizational member enrols on such a course. One important kind of support from employing organizations to make sure that students and organizations benefit and reduce the possibilities of drop-out is to foster a culture of mentoring. Another key area is to make sure that staff have opportunities to apply their learning in the organization.

2. Organizations could also reflect on Wenger at al's idea of a 'double-knit structure' for learning organizations: a place in the organization for communities of practice that cut across the organizational structures and teams, in which communities of practice can 'steward knowledge' (2002, p.18). Communities of practice could include those who are following courses of study or training as well as staff experienced in a particular area of practice, to share and build knowledge more widely in the organization.

7.5.3 Donors and sponsors supporting capacity-building through education and training

1. Many donors interested in the education sector tend to focus on primary education. However capacity-building in organizations that are fighting poverty, as well as in organizations needed for the supply of goods and services and general wealth creation, should be an integral part of donor support for education and training. In particular, direct support for the development and provision of such programmes, including versioning and conceptualisation for different locations would be highly beneficial to development organizations.

2. Donors can also assist capacity building in public and private sector organizations through bursary schemes for students. These however should be combined with promotion and support for learning communities or communities of practice that will enable a wider organizational impact. Practitioner networks could also be enhanced by electronic means, including possibilities for professional updating, establishing best practices and creating platforms for innovation. Closer links between donors and development organizations are needed to enable this to happen.

7.6 AND FINALLY…

There is still much we do not know about the processes involved. Future studies could examine ways of maximising organizational capacity-building potential using ethnographic methods. In particular, it would further assist policy development to explore the role of communities of practice. Of special interest would be an examination of the potential of learning networks for development policy and management that go beyond particular organizations.

References

Ayele, S., Dzvimbo, P., Johnson, H., Kasiamhuru, P., Malaba, J., Manjengwa, P., Nazare, F., Potgieter, H., Thomas, A., Tyler, S., Woodley, A., 2002, *Education for Development Policy and Management: the Impacts of Educational Programmes on Individual and Organizational Capacity-Building*, Final Report, Mimeo, November.

Argyris, C. and Schön, D.A., 1996, *Organizational Learning II. Theory, Method and Practice*, Mass., USA, Addison-Wesley.

Atkins, P., Baker, C., Tomlinson, N., Cole, S., George, J., Haywood, M., Thorpe, M., Tomlinson, N., Whitaker, S., 2002, *Supporting Open Learners Reader*, Milton Keynes, The Open University.

Baker, C., Tomlinson, N., Cole, S., Stevens, V., George, J., Howell, A., Thorpe, M., 1996, *Supporting Open Learners Reader*, Milton Keynes, The Open University.

Bandura, A., 1977, *Social Learning Theory*, Englewood Cliffs, N.J., Prentice Hall.

Bandura, A., 1986, *Social Foundations of Thought and Action: A Social Cognitive Theory*, Englewood Cliffs, N.J., Prentice Hall.

Development in Practice, 2002, Special Issue on 'Development and the Learning Organization', 12(3 & 4).

Dewey, J., 1938, *Experience and Education*, Kappa Delta Pi.

Entwistle, N., 1994, Teaching and the Quality of Learning, CVCP/SRHE.

Farnes, N., 1993, 'Taking a theoretical approach to course evaluation', *Report No 7*, Milton Keynes, Institute for Educational Technology, Open University.

Guba, E. & Lincoln, Y., 1989, *Fourth Generation Evaluation*, London, Sage.

Hailey, J. and James, R., 2002, 'Learning leaders: the key to learning organizations', *Development in Practice*, Special Issue on 'Development and the Learning Organization', 12(3&4), pp.398-408.

Hulme, D. (1989) 'Learning and not learning from experience in rural project planning', *Public Administration and Development*, 9, pp.1-16.

Johnson, H. and Wilson, G., 1999, 'Institutional sustainability as learning', *Development in Practice*, Vol.9, Nos.1&2, pp.43-55.

Johnson, H. and Wilson, G., 2000, 'Biting the bullet: civil society, social learning and the transformation of local governance', *World Development*, pp.1891-1906.

Johnson, H. and Wilson, G., 2003a, 'Which way to learn? A report into the municipal partnership between Kampala City Council and Kirklees Metropolitan Council, 1995 – 2002', Draft, Mimeo, July.

Johnson, H. and Wilson, G., 2003b, 'Which way to learn? A report into the municipal partnership between Iganga Town Council and Daventry District Council, 1995 – 2003', Draft, Mimeo, July.

Kolb, D., 1984, *Experiential Learning. Experience as the Source of Learning and Development*, London, Prentice Hall.

Korten, D. C., 1984, 'Rural development programming: the learning process approach', in Korten, D. C. and Klauss, R. (eds.), *People-centered Development. Contributions Toward Theory and Planning Frameworks*, West Hartford, Kumarian Press.

Lewis, J. and Tyler, S., 1999, 'Why managers choose a strategic approach to learning', Presentation to the British Academy of Management Annual Conference, Sterling, September.

Lynton, R. P. and Pareek, U., 2000, *Training for Organizational Transformation. Part 1 For Policy-Makers and Change Managers*, New Delhi/Thousand Oaks/London, Sage.

Morgan, G., 1986, *Images of Organization*, Beverly Hills, Sage.

Rondinelli, D. A., 1993, *Development Project as Policy Experiments*, London and New York, Routledge.

Schön, D., 1983, *The Reflective Practitioner*, New York, Basic Books.

Thomas, A., 1996, 'What is development management?', *Journal of International Development*, 8(1), pp. 95-110.

Thomas, A., 1998, 'Challenging Cases', in A. Thomas, J. Chataway & M.Wuyts (eds.) *Finding out Fast: Investigative Skills for Policy and Development*, London, Sage in association with The Open University, pp.307-332.

Thomas, A., 1999, 'What makes *good* development management?', *Development in Practice*, 9(1&2).

Thomas, A. and Johnson, H., 2002, 'Not only reinforcing but also different stories: combining case studies and survey to investigate how postgraduate programmes can build capacity for development policy and management', Paper for *Combined Methods Conference*, Centre for Development Studies, Swansea, 1-2 July.

Tabor, D. C., forthcoming, *Young Writers at Transition*, London, RoutledgeFalmer.

Tyler, S., 2000, 'Management Development at IBM. A longitudinal study of IBM UK and European students following a first management course with the Open University Business School', Confidential report for the Open University Business School.

Vygotsky, L. S., 1991, 'Genesis of Higher Mental Functions', in Light, P., Sheldon, S. & Woodhead, M. (eds.) *Learning to Think*, Routledge in association with The Open University, Ch.3 pp.32-41.

Webber, S. and Chatiza, K., 2000, 'Evaluation of the Open University programme, Managing Development Agencies in Southern Africa', Spring.

Wenger, E., McDermott, R. and Snyder, W. M., 2002, *Cultivating Communities of Practice. A Guide to Managing Knowledge*, Boston, Mass., Harvard Business School Press.

Wenger, E., 1998, *Communities of Practice. Learning, Meaning, and Identity*, Cambridge, CUP.

White, L. G., 1987, *Creating Opportunities for Change. Approaches to Managing Development Programs*, Boulder and London, Lynne Rienner Publishers.

Appendix

DESCRIPTIVE TABLES: STUDENTS AND LINE MANAGER RESPONSES

I STUDENTS

Data in the tables are percentages unless otherwise stated.

Number of respondents: 354

CHARACTERISTICS OF STUDENTS

Table A1 Age of respondents

Age group (years)	Survey Group				Total	Average
	OU	SAPES	UNISA	ZOU		
Less than 20	1	0	0	0	1	**0**
20 - 29	13	3	14	17	12	**12**
30 - 39	36	44	55	26	40	**40**
40 - 49	25	42	26	43	28	**34**
50+	25	8	5	13	18	**13**
Not Stated	0	3	0	0	1	**1**
Total	100	100	100	100	100	**100**
Total number	222	36	73	23	354	

Table A2 Gender of respondents

Sex	Survey Group				Total	Average
	OU	SAPES	UNISA	ZOU		
Male	36	64	73	57	48	**58**
Female	63	36	26	43	51	**42**
Not Stated	0	0	1	0	1	**0**
Total	100	100	100	100	100	**100**
Total number	222	36	73	23	354	

Table A3 Status in organisation

Status in organisation	Survey Group				Total	Average
	OU	SAPES	UNISA	ZOU		
Director/Owner	8	11	5	26	9	**13**
Senior manager/senior officer	16	36	29	30	22	**28**
Middle/project manager	30	31	26	17	28	**26**
Junior/first line manager	11	3	18	13	12	**11**
Other	19	19	16	9	18	**16**
Not Stated	16	0	5	4	11	**6**
Total	100	100	100	100	100	**100**
Total number	222	36	73	23	354	

Table A4: Number of years in organisation

Years	Survey Group				Total	Average
	OU	SAPES	UNISA	ZOU		
< 1	16	22	26	0	9	**16**
1 - <2	20	19	27	9	14	**19**
2 - <5	23	22	22	26	23	**23**
5 < 10	16	20	10	26	22	**18**
10+	10	6	11	35	20	**15**
Not stated	15	11	4	4	12	**9**
Total	100	100	100	100	100	**100**
Total number	222	36	73	23	354	

STUDENTS AND THEIR ORGANISATIONS

Table A5 Type of organisation worked for

Type of organisation	Survey Group				Total	Average
	OU	SAPES	UNISA	ZOU		
Private firm	10	6	55	0	18	**18**
Community based organisation	4	0	1	4	3	**2**
Non-governmental organisation	33	31	7	65	29	**34**
State organisation	13	42	14	9	16	**20**
Parastatal	4	6	14	4	6	**7**
Donor agency	5	6	1	9	4	**5**
Inter-governmental organisation	1	8	5	0	3	**4**
Self-employed or pvt. consultant	5	3	0	4	4	**3**
Other	9	0	1	4	6	**4**
Not Stated	15	0	1	0	10	**4**
Total	100	100	100	100	100	**100**
Total number	222	36	73	23	354	

Table A6 Description of place of work

Type of workplace	Survey Group				Total	Average
	OU	SAPES	UNISA	ZOU		
Independent locally-based organisation	13	6	21	35	15	**19**
Area office of larger organisation	13	8	22	26	15	**17**
National office of national organisation	7	42	14	17	13	**20**
Head office of regional organisation	5	14	12	4	7	**9**
National office of international organisation	25	17	15	9	21	**17**
Own home/self-employed/pvt. consultant	6	3	4	4	5	**4**
Other	15	11	7	0	12	**8**
Not Stated	17	0	5	4	12	**7**
Total	100	100	100	100	100	**100**
Total number	222	36	73	23	354	

Table A7 Type of work carried out by organisation

Type of work	Survey Group				Total	Average
	OU	SAPES	UNISA	ZOU		
Emergency relief	15	19	1	35	14	**18**
Small-scale local or community development	44	33	1	65	36	**36**
Maintenance of public sevices and infrastructure	18	28	11	4	16	**15**
Commercial business	12	8	32	4	15	**14**
Lobbying and advocacy	28	22	27	39	28	**29**
Training and Institutional capacity building	45	56	5	52	38	**40**
Innovation and problem solving	22	33	8	26	21	**22**
Research, dialogue and publication	28	44	14	13	26	**25**
Other	21	17	16	26	20	**20**
Not Stated	0	0	1	0	0	**0**

Table A8 Overall size of organisation

Number of employees	Survey Group				Total	Average
	OU	SAPES	UNISA	ZOU		
2 - 9	9	3	4	13	8	**7**
10 - 19	3	8	1	9	4	**5**
20 - 29	2	3	0	4	2	**2**
30 - 39	3	8	1	17	4	**7**
40 - 49	3	6	0	0	2	**2**
50 - 99	5	17	5	13	7	**10**
100+	50	33	62	43	51	**47**
Not Stated	24	22	26	0	23	**18**
Total	100	100	100	100	100	**100**
Total number	222	36	73	23	354	

Table A9 Age of organisation

Years	Survey Group				Total	Average
	OU	SAPES	UNISA	ZOU		
> 1	1	0	0	0	1	**0**
1 to >5	7	14	10	9	8	**10**
5 to .10	8	8	7	4	7	**7**
10+	68	67	73	83	70	**73**
Not Stated	16	11	11	4	14	**11**
Total	100	100	100	100	100	**100**
Total number	222	36	73	23	354	

STUDENTS AND THEIR STUDIES

Table A10 Highest qualification prior to enrolment

Qualification	Survey Group				Total	Average
	OU	SAPES	UNISA	ZOU		
Bachelor's or first degree or equivalent	60	81	32	30	55	**51**
Master's or equivalent	23	17	0	13	17	**13**
M Phil	1	0	0	0	1	**0**
PhD or D Phil	3	0	1	0	2	**1**
Other qualifications	13	3	56	52	23	**31**
No qualifications	0	0	11	4	3	**4**
Not Stated	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Total	100	100	100	100	100	**100**
Total number	222	36	73	23	354	

Table A11 How far students have gone with studies

How far gone with studies	Survey Group				Total	Average
	OU	SAPES	UNISA	ZOU		
Completed	11	75	0	22	16	**27**
Completed at least part one	20	25	45	65	29	**39**
Currently taking courses	37	3	75	30	41	**36**
Intend to take further courses	41	3	32	43	36	**30**

Table A12 Motivation for embarking on programme

Type of motivation	Survey Group				Total	Average
	OU	SAPES	UNISA	ZOU		
Personal development	80	72	84	61	79	**74**
Professional development	73	75	84	87	76	**80**
Improve career prospects in current occupation	36	44	62	43	43	**46**
Change careers	33	14	29	17	29	**23**
Achieve more complete education	32	39	42	17	34	**33**
Required by employer	0	19	11	0	5	**8**
Other reason	8	3	8	9	8	**7**

Table A13 Who made the decision to study

Whose decision	Survey Group				Total	Average
	OU	SAPES	UNISA	ZOU		
Student's decision	95	92	78	83	90	**87**
Directed to take the course	0	3	4	4	2	**3**
Partly student's decision, partly of organization or funder	4	6	18	13	8	**10**
Not Stated	1	0	0	0	0	**0**
Total	100	100	100	100	100	**100**
Total number	222	36	73	23	354	

Table A15 Whether students were able to choose institution with which to study

Own choice	Survey Group				Total	Average
	OU	SAPES	UNISA	ZOU		
Yes	90	97	85	61	88	**83**
No	7	0	15	26	9	**12**
Not stated	3	3	0	13	3	**5**
Total	100	100	100	100	100	**100**
Total number	222	36	73	23	354	

Table A15a Satisfaction with programme: enjoyment of courses studied

Degree of satisfaction	Survey Group				Total	Average
	OU	SAPES	UNISA	ZOU		
Not at all	0	3	7	0	2	**3**
Not Much	0	3	1	4	1	**2**
Somewhere in between/mixed	8	0	7	0	6	**4**
Quite a lot	48	44	36	52	45	**45**
Very much	43	50	49	44	45	**47**
Not Stated	1	0	0	0	1	**0**
Total	100	100	100	100	100	**100**
Total number	222	36	73	23	354	

Table A15b Satisfaction with programme: quality of content

Degree of satisfaction	Survey Group				Total	Average
	OU	SAPES	UNISA	ZOU		
Not Much	1	6	1	4	2	**3**
Somewhere in between/mixed	9	8	1	9	7	**7**
Quite a lot	46	50	37	52	45	**46**
Very much	42	36	60	35	45	**43**
Not Stated	2	0	0	0	1	**1**
Total	100	100	100	100	100	**100**
Total number	222	36	73	23	354	

Table A15c Satisfaction with programme: quality of teaching/learning support

Degree of satisfaction	Survey Group				Total	Average
	OU	SAPES	UNISA	ZOU		
Not at all	1	3	1	0	1	**1**
Not Much	6	6	8	9	7	**7**
Somewhere in between/mixed	30	11	19	22	25	**21**
Quite a lot	45	72	44	43	47	**51**
Very much	17	8	28	26	19	**20**
Not Stated	1	0	0	0	1	**0**
Total	100	100	100	100	100	**100**
Total number	222	36	73	23	354	

Table A15d Satisfaction with programme: amount of teaching/learning support

Degree of satisfaction	Survey Group				Total	Average
	OU	SAPES	UNISA	ZOU		
Not at all	2	5	3	0	2	**3**
Not Much	10	3	7	9	8	**7**
Somewhere in between/mixed	29	33	31	39	31	**33**
Quite a lot	44	42	44	30	43	**40**
Very much	14	17	15	22	15	**17**
Not Stated	1	0	0	0	1	**0**
Total	100	100	100	100	100	**100**
Total number	222	36	73	23	354	

Table A15e Satisfaction with programme: relevance of content to work

Degree of satisfaction	Survey Group				Total	Average
	OU	SAPES	UNISA	ZOU		
Not at all	7	3	0	0	5	**3**
Not Much	9	0	3	0	6	**3**
Somewhere in between/mixed	23	8	10	13	18	**14**
Quite a lot	32	47	42	26	36	**37**
Very much	26	42	45	52	33	**41**
Not Stated	3	0	0	9	2	**3**
Total	100	100	100	100	100	**100**
Total number	222	36	73	23	354	

Table A15f Satisfaction with programme: course/programme met expectations

Degree of satisfaction	Survey Group				Total	Average
	OU	SAPES	UNISA	ZOU		
Not Much	2	0	0	4	1	**2**
Somewhere in between/mixed	13	17	5	0	11	**9**
Quite a lot	42	39	42	57	43	**45**
Very much	42	44	51	39	44	**44**
Not Stated	1	0	3	0	1	**1**
Total	100	100	100	100	100	**100**
Total number	222	36	73	23	354	

Table A15g Satisfaction with programme: printed learning materials

Degree of satisfaction	Survey Group				Total	Average
	OU	SAPES	UNISA	ZOU		
Not at all[37]	1	6	0	0	1	**2**
Not very	1	3	0	4	1	**2**
Fairly	15	33	10	22	17	**20**
Very	82	58	85	70	79	**74**
Not Stated	1	0	5	4	2	**2**
Total	100	100	100	100	100	**100**
Total number	222	36	73	23	354	

Table A15h Satisfaction with programme: tutor feedback on assignments

Degree of satisfaction	Survey Group				Total	Average
	OU	SAPES	UNISA	ZOU		
Not at all	1	3	0	0	1	**1**
Not very	5	8	11	4	6	**7**
Fairly	44	33	18	26	36	**30**
Very	49	56	66	61	54	**58**
Not Stated	1	0	5	9	3	**4**
Total	100	100	100	100	100	**100**
Total number	222	36	73	23	354	

Table A15i Satisfaction with programme: relevance to country

Degree of satisfaction	Survey Group				Total	Average
	OU	SAPES	UNISA	ZOU		
Not at all	2	0	3	4	2	**2**
Not very	7	0	6	0	5	**3**
Fairly	31	3	37	19	29	**22**
Very	33	92	49	61	44	**59**
Not Stated	27	5	5	17	20	**14**
Total	100	100	100	100	100	**100**
Total number	222	36	73	23	354	

Table A15j Satisfaction with programme: reflective practitioner approach/relevance to own work situation

Degree of satisfaction	Survey Group				Total	Average
	OU	SAPES	UNISA	ZOU		
Not at all	1	0	0	4	1	**1**
Not very	2	0	3	0	2	**1**
Fairly	31	11	42	17	31	**26**
Very	33	83	45	57	42	**54**
Not Stated	33	6	10	22	24	**18**
Total	100	100	100	100	100	**100**
Total number	222	36	73	23	354	

[37] The qualifiers for this and the subsequent tables on satisfaction were different from the previous tables on satisfaction.

Table A16 Average hours per week spent studying

Average hours	Survey Group				Total	Average
	OU	SAPES	UNISA	ZOU		
< 10	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
10 - 19	92	39	88	74	85	**73**
20 - 29	7	3	10	13	8	**8**
30 - 39	0	22	0	0	2	**6**
40 - 69	0	31	0	0	3	**8**
70+	0	3	0	0	0	**1**
Not Stated	0	3	3	13	2	**5**
Total	100	100	100	100	100	**100**
Total number	222	36	73	23	354	

Table A15f Satisfaction with programme: course/programme met expectations

Degree of satisfaction	Survey Group				Total	Average
	OU	SAPES	UNISA	ZOU		
Not Much	2	0	0	4	1	**2**
Somewhere in between/mixed	13	17	5	0	11	**9**
Quite a lot	42	39	42	57	43	**45**
Very much	42	44	51	39	44	**44**
Not Stated	1	0	3	0	1	**1**
Total	100	100	100	100	100	**100**
Total number	222	36	73	23	354	

Table A17 Whether learnt useful ideas for work practice

Extent of useful ideas	Survey Group				Total	Average
	OU	SAPES	UNISA	ZOU		
None	4	0	0	0	2	**1**
Not many	19	8	1	4	14	**8**
Quite a lot	57	72	60	61	60	**63**
Very many	18	19	37	35	23	**27**
Not Stated	2	0	1	0	2	**1**
Total	100	100	100	100	100	**100**
Total number	222	36	73	23	354	

Table A18 Whether ideas learnt are still useful

Extent of continuing usefulness	Survey Group				Total	Average
	OU	SAPES	UNISA	ZOU		
Not at all useful	2	0	1	0	2	**1**
Not very useful	15	3	1	0	10	**5**
Quite useful	57	61	42	39	53	**50**
Very useful	24	36	53	61	34	**44**
Not Stated	1	0	1	0	1	**1**
Total	100	100	100	100	100	**100**
Total number	222	36	73	23	354	

Table A19 How often materials have been consulted since completing the courses

Frequency of consultation	Survey Group				Total	Average
	OU	SAPES	UNISA	ZOU		
Never	14	3	8	4	11	**7**
Occasionally	65	36	48	30	56	**45**
Quite often	17	44	34	39	25	**34**
Very often	4	17	7	22	7	**13**
Not Stated	1	0	3	4	1	**2**
Total	100	100	100	100	100	**100**
Total number	222	36	73	23	354	

Table A20 Support given by organisation to students

Type of support	Survey Group				Total	Average
	OU	SAPES	UNISA	ZOU		
Staff cover for student whilst on studying	4	36	33	13	14	**22**
Regular time off to study	10	58	18	39	18	**31**
Time off for exam revision	28	56	66	74	42	**56**
Extra learning materials	2	8	8	9	4	**7**
Payment for tuition fees	32	11	63	48	38	**39**
Mentoring	4	8	15	13	7	**10**
Opportunities to put your learning into practice	25	64	41	65	35	**49**
General support and encouragement	36	50	44	43	40	**43**
Another type of support	10	14	7	9	10	**10**

Table A21 Whether organisation offers types of support to staff in general

Type of support	Survey Group				Total	Average
	OU	SAPES	UNISA	ZOU		
Time off to develop new skills	27	75	29	48	34	**45**
Mentoring or coaching	17	31	38	13	23	**25**
Opportunities to develop new skills	50	83	67	65	58	**66**
Opportunities to put new skills into practice	34	69	44	70	42	**54**
Career development plan	21	44	44	39	29	**37**
Another type of support	9	8	1	100	13	**30**

IMPACT OF STUDENTS' LEARNING ON ORGANIZATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Table A22 Extent to which students have been able to apply their learning to work

Extent of application	Survey Group				Total	**Average**
	OU	SAPES	UNISA	ZOU		
A great deal	9	36	36	39	19	**30**
Quite a lot	43	56	45	48	45	**48**
Not much	27	6	12	13	21	**15**
Not at all	7	3	1	0	5	**3**
Not stated	15	0	5	0	11	**5**
Total	100	100	100	100	100	**100**
Total number	222	36	73	23	354	

Table A23a Whether students have been able to contribute to selected (strategic) aspects of organisational work as a result of their learning

Team work

Extent of contribution	Survey Group				**Total**	**Average**
	OU	**SAPES**	**UNISA**	**ZOU**		
Major	13	33	36	52	22	**34**
Moderate	28	56	49	39	36	**43**
Minor	23	6	10	4	18	**11**
No contribution	16	6	1	4	11	**7**
Not stated	20	0	4	0	14	**6**
Total	100	100	100	100	100	**100**
Total number	222	36	73	23	354	

Table A23b Whether students have been able to contribute to selected (strategic) aspects of organisational work as a result of their learning

Communication/communication systems

Extent of contribution	Survey Group				Total	Average
	OU	SAPES	UNISA	ZOU		
Major	9	33	29	17	16	**22**
Moderate	25	44	42	57	33	**42**
Minor	26	11	22	13	23	**18**
No contribution	20	8	1	9	14	**10**
Not stated	20	3	5	4	14	**8**
Total	100	100	100	100	100	**100**
Total number	222	36	73	23	354	

Table A23c Whether students have been able to contribute to selected (strategic) aspects of organisational work as a result of their learning

The use of technology

Extent of contribution	Survey Group				Total	Average
	OU	SAPES	UNISA	ZOU		
Major	5	17	22	13	10	**14**
Moderate	13	28	42	43	23	**32**
Minor	21	33	25	22	23	**25**
No contribution	41	14	7	17	30	**20**
Not stated	20	8	4	4	14	**9**
Total	100	100	100	100	100	**100**
Total number	222	36	73	23	354	

Table A23d Whether students have been able to contribute to selected (strategic) aspects of organisational work as a result of their learning

Planning/budgeting

Extent of contribution	Survey Group				Total	Average
	OU	SAPES	UNISA	ZOU		
Major	11	39	37	52	22	**35**
Moderate	22	39	30	17	25	**27**
Minor	19	11	23	17	19	**18**
No contribution	28	8	5	9	20	**13**
Not Stated	20	3	4	4	14	**8**
Total	100	100	100	100	100	**100**
Total number	222	36	73	23	354	

Table A23e Whether students have been able to contribute to selected (strategic) aspects of organisational work as a result of their learning

Managing information

Extent of contribution	Survey Group				Total	Average
	OU	SAPES	UNISA	ZOU		
Major	8	28	30	22	16	**22**
Moderate	27	44	42	65	34	**45**
Minor	23	19	18	13	21	**18**
No contribution	21	6	5	0	15	**8**
Not stated	21	3	4	0	14	**7**
Total	100	100	100	100	100	**100**
Total number	222	36	73	23	354	

Table A23f Whether students have been able to contribute to selected (strategic) aspects of organisational work as a result of their learning

Organisational systems development/management

Extent of contribution	Survey Group				Total	Average
	OU	SAPES	UNISA	ZOU		
Major	9	36	29	22	16	**24**
Moderate	21	42	30	48	27	**35**
Minor	27	17	23	22	25	**22**
No contribution	23	6	14	9	18	**13**
Not stated	20	0	4	0	14	**6**
Total	100	100	100	100	100	**100**
Total number	222	36	73	23	354	

Table A23g Whether students have been able to contribute to selected (strategic) aspects of organisational work as a result of their learning

How the organisation deals with beneficiaries/customers

Extent of contribution	Survey Group				Total	Average
	OU	SAPES	UNISA	ZOU		
Major	14	47	32	52	23	**36**
Moderate	23	25	22	30	24	**25**
Minor	22	17	23	9	21	**18**
No contribution	22	8	19	4	19	**13**
Not stated	19	3	4	4	14	**8**
Total	100	100	100	100	100	**100**
Total number	222	36	73	23	354	

Table A23h Whether students have been able to contribute to selected (strategic) aspects of organisational work as a result of their learning

Organizational culture (norms)

Extent of contribution	Survey Group				Total	Average
	OU	SAPES	UNISA	ZOU		
Major	5	28	19	39	13	**23**
Moderate	22	33	34	48	27	**34**
Minor	27	25	27	4	25	**21**
No contribution	27	8	15	9	21	**15**
Not stated	19	6	4	0	13	**7**
Total	100	100	100	100	100	**100**
Total number	222	36	73	23	354	

Table A23i Whether students have been able to contribute to selected (strategic) aspects of organisational work as a result of their learning

Organisational structure

Extent of contribution	Survey Group				Total	Average
	OU	SAPES	UNISA	ZOU		
Major	7	22	16	35	12	**20**
Moderate	17	42	32	30	23	**30**
Minor	20	22	32	4	22	**20**
No contribution	37	6	16	30	29	**22**
Not stated	14	8	4	0	10	**7**
Total	100	100	100	100	100	**100**
Total number	222	36	73	23	354	

Table A23j Whether students have been able to contribute to selected (strategic) aspects of organisational work as a result of their learning

Organisational strategy

Extent of contribution	Survey Group				Total	Average
	OU	SAPES	UNISA	ZOU		
Major	11	47	19	48	19	**31**
Moderate	22	44	34	22	27	**31**
Minor	22	0	25	13	20	**15**
No contribution	26	6	16	17	21	**16**
Not stated	19	3	6	0	13	**7**
Total	100	100	100	100	100	**100**
Total number	222	36	73	23	354	

Table A23k Whether students have been able to contribute to selected (strategic) aspects of organisational work as a result of their learning

Organisational objectives/mission

Extent of contribution	Survey Group				Total	Average
	OU	SAPES	UNISA	ZOU		
Major	11	27	23	43	19	**26**
Moderate	24	44	30	26	27	**31**
Minor	22	3	25	9	20	**15**
No contribution	25	3	18	22	21	**17**
Not stated	19	3	4	0	13	**7**
Total	100	100	100	100	100	**100**
Total number	222	36	73	23	354	

Table A24a Specific contributions or improvements made by students as a result of their learning

Management of own workload

Extent of contribution	Survey Group				Total	Average
	OU	SAPES	UNISA	ZOU		
Major	12	47	26	52	21	**34**
Moderate	35	42	53	39	40	**42**
Minor	26	8	15	4	21	**13**
No contribution	11	0	0	4	7	**4**
Not stated	16	3	5	0	12	**6**
Total	100	100	100	100	100	**100**
Total number	222	36	73	23	354	

Table A24b Specific contributions or improvements made by students as a result of their learning

Own performance or results

Extent of contribution	Survey Group				Total	Average
	OU	SAPES	UNISA	ZOU		
Major	16	61	38	61	28	**44**
Moderate	42	33	53	39	43	**42**
Minor	19	0	4	0	13	**6**
No Contribution	7	3	0	0	5	**3**
Not stated	16	3	4	0	11	**6**
Total	100	100	100	100	100	**100**
Total number	222	36	73	23	354	

Table A24c Specific contributions or improvements made by students as a result of their learning

Internal relationships in own work group

Extent of contribution	Survey Group				Total	Average
	OU	SAPES	UNISA	ZOU		
Major	11	25	49	48	23	**33**
Moderate	30	58	38	48	36	**44**
Minor	25	6	7	4	18	**11**
No Contribution	16	8	1	0	11	**6**
Not stated	18	3	4	0	12	**6**
Total	100	100	100	100	100	**100**
Total number	222	36	73	23	354	

Table A24d Specific contributions or improvements made by students as a result of their learning

Performance or results of work team

Extent of contribution	Survey Group				Total	Average
	OU	SAPES	UNISA	ZOU		
Major	9	33	41	48	21	**33**
Moderate	27	47	41	43	33	**40**
Minor	27	11	11	9	21	**15**
No Contribution	18	6	1	0	12	**6**
Not stated	18	3	5	0	13	**7**
Total	100	100	100	100	100	**100**
Total number	222	36	73	23	354	

Table A24e Specific contributions or improvements made by students as a result of their learning

Norms (culture) in the field

Extent of contribution	Survey Group				Total	Average
	OU	SAPES	UNISA	ZOU		
Major	7	19	26	22	13	**19**
Moderate	32	50	44	57	38	**46**
Minor	23	19	22	22	23	**22**
No Contribution	21	3	4	0	14	**7**
Not stated	17	8	4	0	12	**7**
Total	100	100	100	100	100	**100**
Total number	222	36	73	23	354	

Table A24f Specific contributions or improvements made by students as a result of their learning

Relationship between organizations in the field

Extent of contribution	Survey Group				Total	Average
	OU	SAPES	UNISA	ZOU		
Major	12	19	16	61	17	**27**
Moderate	26	44	52	30	33	**38**
Minor	23	19	19	4	21	**16**
No Contribution	22	6	8	4	16	**10**
Not stated	17	3	4	0	12	**6**
Total	100	100	100	100	100	**100**
Total number	222	36	73	23	354	

Table A24g Specific contributions or improvements made by students as a result of their learning

Positive social change or impact on development Extent of contribution	Survey Group				Total	Average
	OU	SAPES	UNISA	ZOU		
Major	9	36	29	35	18	**27**
Moderate	23	36	38	43	29	**35**
Minor	28	17	19	13	24	**19**
No Contribution	23	3	8	4	17	**10**
Not stated	17	8	4	4	12	**8**
Total	100	100	100	100	100	**100**
Total number	222	36	73	23	354	

Table A25 What aspects of knowledge students were able to share with others

Area of knowledge shared	Survey Group (affirmative responses only)				Total	Average
	OU	SAPES	UNISA	ZOU		
Explaining techniques or concepts to others	56	83	86	87	67	**78**
Lending course materials to others	35	58	34	61	39	**47**
Putting forward ideas at meetings	60	92	85	96	70	**83**
Running teaching/training sessions for others	25	61	32	57	32	**44**
In other ways	10	8	4	13	9	**9**

Table A26 With whom students shared their knowledge

People with whom shared knowledge	Survey Group (affirmative responses only)				Total	Average
	OU	SAPES	UNISA	ZOU		
Senior Management Team	24	75	40	57	35	**49**
Boss	30	58	71	39	42	**50**
Colleagues in organization	56	78	86	78	66	**75**
Those reporting directly to student	26	56	66	74	40	**56**
Beneficiaries/customers/clients	36	58	30	44	38	**42**
Donors or investors	10	42	1	39	13	**23**
Colleagues working in a similar field	35	69	53	61	44	**55**
Others	13	8	7	17	11	**11**

IMPACT OF LEARNING ON STUDENTS

Table A27a How students have changed as a result of their studies

Am a more reflective learner Extent of change	Survey Group				Total	Average
	OU	SAPES	UNISA	ZOU		
Not at all	6	0	3	0	5	**2**
Not very much	21	17	7	9	17	**14**
Quite a lot	57	36	67	52	56	**53**
A lot	11	44	19	39	18	**28**
Not stated	5	3	4	0	4	**3**
Total	100	100	100	100	100	**100**
Total number	222	36	73	23	354	

Table A27b How students have changed as a result of their studies

Am more reflective in general

Extent of change	Survey Group				Total	Average
	OU	SAPES	UNISA	ZOU		
Not at all	16	0	6	0	11	**6**
Not very much	41	17	19	17	33	**24**
Quite a lot	32	58	47	57	40	**49**
A lot	5	22	26	26	12	**20**
Not stated	6	3	3	0	5	**3**
Total	100	100	100	100	100	**100**
Total number	222	36	73	23	354	

Table A27c How students have changed as a result of their studies

Am more confident

Extent of change	Survey Group				Total	Average
	OU	SAPES	UNISA	ZOU		
Not at all	14	0	18	4	12	**9**
Not very much	25	7	30	22	24	**21**
Quite a lot	40	39	26	30	36	**34**
A lot	18	56	23	39	24	**34**
Not stated	3	0	3	4	3	**3**
Total	100	100	100	100	100	**100**
Total number	222	36	73	23	354	

Table A27d How students have changed as a result of their studies

Put forward ideas more

Extent of change	Survey Group				Total	Average
	OU	SAPES	UNISA	ZOU		
Not at all	8	3	1	0	6	**3**
Not very much	23	17	12	13	20	**16**
Quite a lot	53	33	59	65	53	**53**
A lot	13	44	25	22	19	**26**
Not stated	4	3	3	0	3	**3**
Total	100	100	100	100	100	**100**
Total number	222	36	73	23	354	

Table A27e How students have changed as a result of their studies

More open to new ideas

Extent of change	Survey Group				Total	Average
	OU	SAPES	UNISA	ZOU		
Not at all	10	3	3	0	7	**4**
Not very much	22	6	10	9	17	**12**
Quite a lot	50	33	45	44	47	**43**
A lot	16	58	40	48	27	**41**
Not stated	3	0	2	0	2	**1**
Total	100	100	100	100	100	**100**
Total number	222	36	73	23	354	

Table A27f How students have changed as a result of their studies

Make more decisions

Extent of change	Survey Group				Total	Average
	OU	SAPES	UNISA	ZOU		
Not at all	9	3	3	0	6	**4**
Not very much	22	0	10	4	16	**9**
Quite a lot	52	44	45	57	50	**50**
A lot	13	50	40	39	24	**36**
Not stated	4	3	3	0	4	**3**
Total	100	100	100	100	100	**100**
Total number	222	36	73	23	354	

Table A27g How students have changed as a result of their studies

Take more responsibility

Extent of change	Survey Group				Total	Average
	OU	SAPES	UNISA	ZOU		
Not at all	14	0	4	0	9	**5**
Not very much	31	14	10	13	23	**17**
Quite a lot	38	47	48	43	42	**44**
A lot	13	39	36	43	22	**33**
Not stated	5	0	3	0	3	**2**
Total	100	100	100	100	100	**100**
Total number	222	36	73	23	354	

Table A27h How students have changed as a result of their studies

Consult more with others

Extent of change	Survey Group				Total	Average
	OU	SAPES	UNISA	ZOU		
Not at all	12	3	3	0	9	**5**
Not very much	36	8	23	30	30	**24**
Quite a lot	36	53	40	44	39	**43**
A lot	11	36	31	26	18	**26**
Not stated	5	0	3	0	4	**2**
Total	100	100	100	100	100	**100**
Total number	222	36	73	23	354	

Table A27i How students have changed as a result of their studies

Analyse and investigate more before acting

Extent of change	Survey Group				Total	Average
	OU	SAPES	UNISA	ZOU		
Not at all	14	0	4	0	9	**5**
Not very much	30	14	10	13	23	**17**
Quite a lot	38	47	48	43	42	**44**
A lot	13	39	36	43	22	**33**
Not stated	5	0	3	0	3	**2**
Total	100	100	100	100	100	**100**
Total number	222	36	73	23	354	

Table A27j How students have changed as a result of their studies

Work more in teams

Extent of change	Survey Group				Total	Average
	OU	SAPES	UNISA	ZOU		
Not at all	16	0	5	0	11	**5**
Not very much	41	17	19	17	32	**24**
Quite a lot	32	58	47	57	40	**49**
A lot	5	22	26	26	12	**20**
Not stated	6	3	3	0	5	**3**
Total	100	100	100	100	100	**100**
Total number	222	36	73	23	354	

Table A27k How students have changed as a result of their studies

More gender aware

Extent of change	Survey Group				Total	Average
	OU	SAPES	UNISA	ZOU		
Not at all	7	0	3	0	5	**3**
Not very much	22	3	8	9	16	**11**
Quite a lot	51	55	44	48	50	**50**
A lot	15	42	42	43	25	**36**
Not stated	5	0	3	0	5	**2**
Total	100	100	100	100	100	**100**
Total number	222	36	73	23	354	

Table A28a How studying on programme has helped students

Provided mental stimulation

Extent to which studying helped	Survey Group				Total	Average
	OU	SAPES	UNISA	ZOU		
Not at all	1	3	1	0	1	**1**
Not very much	2	3	2	0	2	**2**
Quite a lot	38	41	37	48	39	**41**
A lot	58	53	56	52	57	**55**
Not stated	1	0	4	0	2	**1**
Total	100	100	100	100	100	**100**
Total number	222	36	73	23	354	

Table A28b How studying on programme has helped students

Helped me obtain a higher salary

Extent to which studying helped	Survey Group				Total	Average
	OU	SAPES	UNISA	ZOU		
Not at all	73	39	47	48	62	**52**
Not very much	14	33	29	26	20	**26**
Quite a lot	8	11	12	9	9	**10**
A lot	2	11	10	17	5	**10**
Not stated	3	6	3	0	3	**3**
Total	100	100	100	100	100	**100**
Total number	222	36	73	23	354	

Table A28c How studying on programme has helped students

Promoted personal growth

Extent to which studying helped	Survey Group				Total	Average
	OU	SAPES	UNISA	ZOU		
Not at all	1	3	1	0	1	**1**
Not very much	9	8	2	4	7	**6**
Quite a lot	58	50	30	52	51	**48**
A lot	30	39	63	44	39	**44**
Not stated	2	0	4	0	2	**2**
Total	100	100	100	100	100	**100**
Total number	222	36	73	23	354	

Table A28d How studying on programme has helped students

Assisted my professional development

Extent to which studying helped	Survey Group				Total	Average
	OU	SAPES	UNISA	ZOU		
Not at all	16	3	5	0	11	**6**
Not very much	20	5	11	4	16	**10**
Quite a lot	41	50	36	30	40	**39**
A lot	22	39	45	65	31	**43**
Not stated	1	3	3	0	2	**2**
Total	100	100	100	100	100	**100**
Total number	222	36	73	23	354	

Table A28e How studying on programme has helped students

Informed me about ideas and practices

Extent to which studying helped	Survey Group				Total	Average
	OU	SAPES	UNISA	ZOU		
Not at all	0	0	1	0	1	**0**
Not very much	3	3	0	0	2	**2**
Quite a lot	53	58	32	52	49	**49**
A lot	42	39	64	48	47	**48**
Not stated	2	0	3	0	2	**1**
Total	100	100	100	100	100	**100**
Total number	222	36	73	23	354	

Table A28f How studying on programme has helped students

Helped me to know when to apply practices

Extent to which studying helped	Survey Group				Total	Average
	OU	SAPES	UNISA	ZOU		
Not at all	6	3	1	0	4	**3**
Not very much	26	11	1	4	18	**11**
Quite a lot	49	50	55	48	50	**51**
A lot	16	33	40	48	25	**34**
Not stated	3	3	3	0	3	**2**
Total	100	100	100	100	100	**100**
Total number	222	36	73	23	354	

Table A28g How studying on programme has helped students

Gave me new conceptual frameworks

Extent to which studying helped	Survey Group				Total	Average
	OU	SAPES	UNISA	ZOU		
Not at all	1	0	1	0	1	**1**
Not very much	8	6	0	4	5	**5**
Quite a lot	53	44	37	31	48	**41**
A lot	36	50	59	65	44	**53**
Not stated	2	0	3	0	2	**1**
Total	100	100	100	100	100	**100**
Total number	222	36	73	23	354	

Table A28h How studying on programme has helped students

Challenged my assumptions

Extent to which studying helped	Survey Group				Total	Average
	OU	SAPES	UNISA	ZOU		
Not at all	3	3	3	0	3	**2**
Not very much	22	14	4	17	17	**14**
Quite a lot	47	53	34	52	45	**47**
A lot	26	30	56	31	33	**36**
Not stated	2	0	3	0	2	**1**
Total	100	100	100	100	100	**100**
Total number	222	36	73	23	354	

Table A28i How studying on programme has helped students

Helped me remedy weaknesses

Extent to which studying helped	Survey Group				Total	Average
	OU	SAPES	UNISA	ZOU		
Not at all	6	0	2	0	4	**2**
Not very much	40	14	8	31	30	**23**
Quite a lot	42	61	50	39	45	**48**
A lot	11	25	37	26	19	**25**
Not stated	1	0	3	4	2	**2**
Total	100	100	100	100	100	**100**
Total number	222	36	73	23	354	

Table A28j How studying on programme has helped students

Helped me identify strengths in myself

Extent to which studying helped	Survey Group				Total	Average
	OU	SAPES	UNISA	ZOU		
Not at all	7	3	3	4	6	**4**
Not very much	31	6	5	0	22	**11**
Quite a lot	49	58	42	48	48	**49**
A lot	12	33	47	48	23	**35**
Not stated	1	0	3	0	1	**1**
Total	100	100	100	100	100	**100**
Total number	222	36	73	23	354	

Table A28k Students by how studying on programme has helped students

Encouraged an attitude of self-development Extent to which studying helped	Survey Group				Total	Average
	OU	SAPES	UNISA	ZOU		
Not at all	4	3	3	0	3	**3**
Not very much	14	0	1	4	9	**5**
Quite a lot	49	39	30	26	43	**36**
A lot	32	58	63	70	44	**56**
Not stated	1	0	3	0	1	**1**
Total	100	100	100	100	100	**100**
Total number	222	36	73	23	354	

Table A29a Whether students have experienced career moves during studies

Type of career move	Survey Group (affirmative responses only)				Total	Average
	OU	SAPES	UNISA	ZOU		
Promotion within the organisation	19	17	33	13	22	**21**
Move to a new job in another organization	23	25	12	9	20	**17**
Became an independent consultant	9	8	7	13	9	**9**
Other type of career move	14	6	7	4	11	**8**

Table A29b How much studying on the programme helped achieve the career move

Type of career move	Survey Group (affirmative responses only – 'quite a lot' and 'a lot')				Total	Average
	OU	SAPES	UNISA	ZOU		
Promotion within the organisation	4	11	26	4	11	**11**
Move to a new job in another organization	8	19	8	9	9	**11**
Became an independent consultant	7	6	4	8	7	**6**
Other type of career move	6	6	3	0	5	**4**

II LINE MANAGERS

Number of respondents: 81 (41 for OU students, 7 for SAPES Trust students, 26 for UNISA students, 7 for ZOU students)

LINE MANAGER CHARACTERISTICS

Table A30 Current professional relationship of line manager with student

Current Professional relationship	%
Line manager	48
Boss	22
Work colleague	20
None-not in same organisation	2
Other	7
Total	100

Table A31 Professional relationship of line manager with student when student was studying

Professional relationship	**%**
Line manager	46
Boss	20
Work colleague	22
None-not in same organisation	4
Other	9
Total	100

Table A32 Length of time line manager managed/worked with student

Years	**%**
> 0.5	2.5
0.5 to 0.99	11
1.0 to 1.99	12
2.0 to 4.99	41
5+	31
Not stated	2.5
Total	100

ORGANISATIONAL SUPPORT

Table A33 Whether organization felt the need to have a student on the programme

Need to have student on programme	**%**
Yes	53
No	48
Not stated	1
Total	100

Table A34 Whether organisation supported the students' studies in different ways (affirmative responses only)

Type of student support	***%***
Regular time off for study	51
Time off for exam revision	70
Staff cover for the student while s/he studied	30
Mentoring	27
Opportunities to put student learning into practice	82
General support and encouragement	84
Another type of support	30

Table A35 Whether organization generally offers employees support (affirmative responses only)

Workplace support	**%**
Time off to develop new skills	67
Mentoring or coaching	62
Opportunities to develop new skills	88
Opportunities to put new skills into practice	91
Career development plan	57
Another type of support	10

Table A36 Whether the organization offers a good environment in different respects

Good environment for:	Not at all good	Not very good	Fairly good	Very good	Not stated	Total
	%	%	%	%		%
Individual reflection	5	17	58	19	1	100
Group reflections	4	25	54	15	1	100
Knowledge sharing	1	15	48	33	3	100
Flexible work practices	3	10	54	31	2	100
Initiating changes	4	14	64	17	1	100
Innovation	3	21	47	26	3	100
Communication	1	22	56	17	4	100

IMPACT ON THE ORGANISATION IN WHICH THE LINE MANAGER WORKED WITH STUDENT

Table A37 Whether student has applied his/her learning at work

Whether applied learning at work	%
A great deal	32
Quite a lot	55
Not much	9
Not at all	0
Not stated	4
Total	100

Table A38 Strategic aspects of organisational work to which student has been able to contribute as a result of his/her learning (percent)

Strategic contributions	Major	Moderate	Minor	No contribution	Not stated	Total
Team work in organisation	47	40	7	4	2	100
Communication/ communication systems	25	48	16	6	5	100
The use of technology	19	31	25	16	9	100
Planning/budgeting	31	28	26	10	5	100
Managing information	31	46	13	4	6	100
Organisational systems development/ management	31	33	22	9	5	100
How the organisation deals with beneficiaries/customers	35	32	18	10	5	100
Organisational culture (norms)	18	52	14	11	5	100
Organisational structure	17	35	28	15	5	100
Organisational strategy	32	33	25	5	5	100
Organisational objectives/mission	31	35	21	9	4	100

Table A39 Specific contributions, changes or improvements by student as a result of their learning (percent)

Specific contributions	Major	Moderate	Minor	No contribution	Not stated	Total
The management of workload	23	58	15	0	4	100
Student's own performance of results	25	57	6	2	10	100
Internal relationships in the student's own workgroup	30	50	11	4	5	100
The performance or results of the student's own work team	24	54	10	6	6	100
Norms (culture) in the field	16	49	24	5	6	100
Relationship between organisation in the field	22	45	20	7	6	100
Positive social change or impact on development	19	47	21	7	6	100
Other	0	10	1	10	79	100

Table A40 Ability of students to share knowledge with others at work (affirmative responses only)

Mode of sharing knowledge	%
Explaining techniques or concepts to others	79
Lending course materials to others	43
Putting forward ideas at meetings	95
Running teaching/training sessions for others	62
In other ways	12

Table A41 With whom students have shared knowledge

People with whom have shared knowledge	%
Senior management team	51
Line Manager	88
Colleagues in organisation	84
Those who report directly to student	53
Beneficiaries/customers/clients	52
Donors or investors	26
Colleagues working in similar field to the student	65
In other organisations	28
Others	0

Table A42 People familiar with student's programme content when student started programme (percent)

People who were familiar	Not at all familiar	Not very familiar	Fairly familiar	Very familiar	Not stated	Total
Line Manager	30	29	26	10	5	100
Student's colleagues in the organisation	28	35	20	7	10	100
Those who report directly to the student	41	30	6	1	22	100
Donors or investors	35	16	11	6	32	100

Table A43 Line manager's view of student's approach to work (percent)

Student's approach to work	Seldom or never true	Sometimes true	Often true	Almost always true	Not stated	Total
Has quite a lot of influence on those around him	0	15	33	49	3	100
Is usually very involved in his/her work	0	3	26	70	1	100
Usually accomplishes what s/he sets out to do	0	5	36	58	1	100
Keeps informed of what the organisation is doing	0	10	39	47	4	100
Treats work activities as unnecessarily complex	52	31	8	5	4	100
Able to make decisions about how to do his/her work	0	7	21	68	4	100
Feels (or is) controlled by others at work.	40	46	10	2	2	100

IMPACT OF LEARNING ON THE STUDENT

Table A44 Changes in students as a result of their learning (percent)

Changes	Not at all	Not very much	Quite a lot	A lot	Not stated	Total
Is a more reflective learner	1	14	65	14	6	100
Is more reflective in general	1	14	67	11	7	100
Is more confident	1	15	50	28	6	100
Puts forward ideas more	1	9	52	32	6	100
Makes more decisions	2	19	53	21	5	100
Takes more responsibility	3	12	54	26	5	100
Consults more with others	5	15	49	25	6	100
Analyses and investigates more before acting	4	16	51	21	8	100
Works more in teams	9	12	46	23	10	100